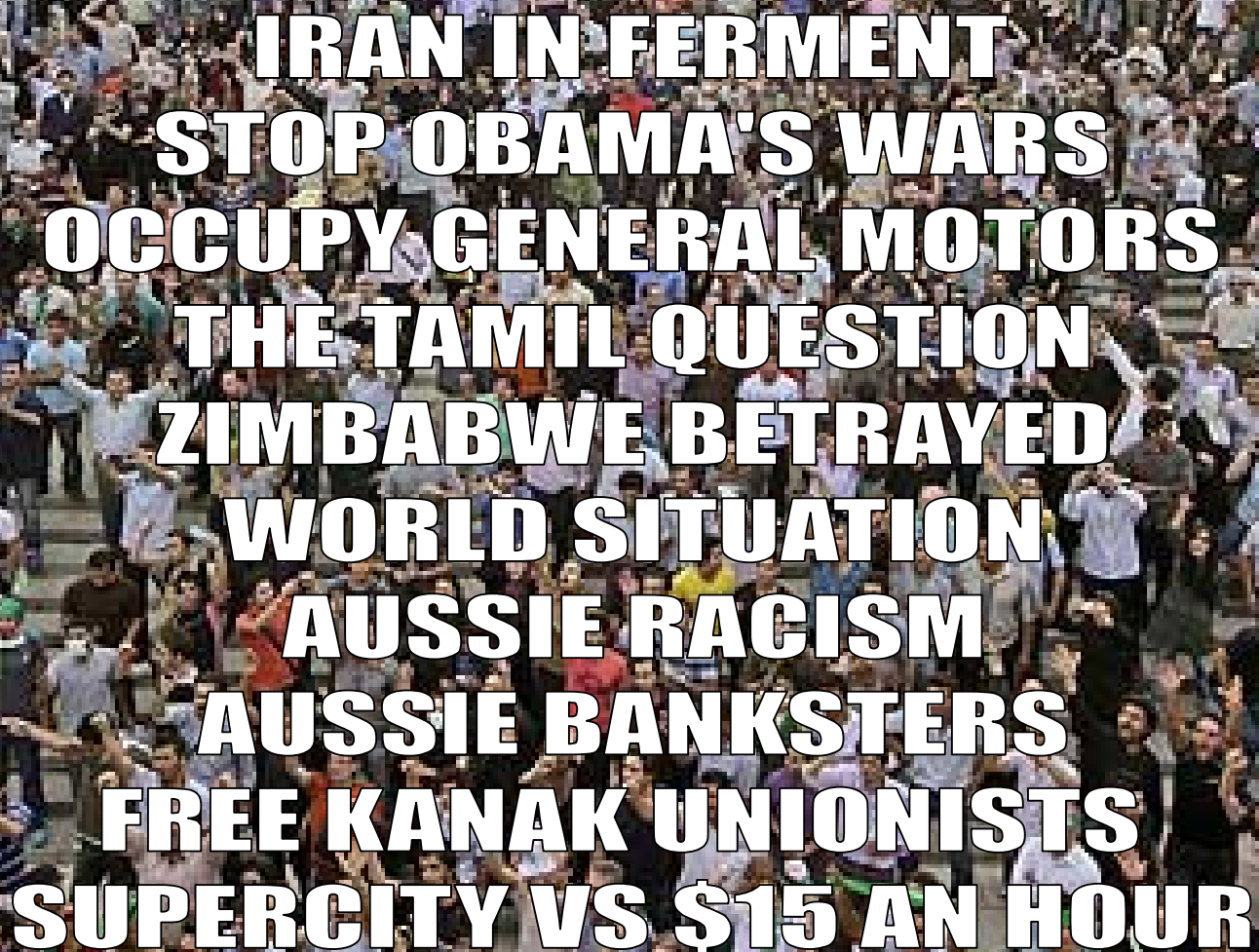


Class Struggle 84 June/July 2009

For a Revolutionary Party!

A large crowd of people is gathered in front of the Azadi Tower in Tehran, Iran. The tower is a large, white, arch-shaped structure with a central opening. The crowd is dense and fills the foreground and middle ground. The text is overlaid on the image.

**IRAN IN FERMENT
STOP OBAMA'S WARS
OCCUPY GENERAL MOTORS
THE TAMIL QUESTION
ZIMBABWE BETRAYED
WORLD SITUATION
AUSSIE RACISM
AUSSIE BANKSTERS
FREE KANAK UNIONISTS
SUPERCITY VS \$15 AN HOUR**

Stop the Superprofitcity!

The Nation/Act agenda for Auckland is to privatise the remaining \$28 billion of public assets (ports, airport, water etc) and free up the land from the Bombay hills to the outskirts of Wellsford for speculators to gorge themselves on the rich pickings. Auckland was founded as a land speculators paradise. It's about returning to the law of the frontier with the sheriff.

After they junked the Royal Commission Report there is no real consultation with the public. The select Committee hearings are always a joke. They will not even allow verbal representations. Hide is astride the Cat D9 and cutting huge swathes through the lives of Aucklanders. The cheapo connection of the South-western motorway with the North-western will destroy hundreds of homes to get the goods from Albany to the Airport ten minutes quicker.

The Mt Albert Bye-election vote showed that the citizens of that suburb would rather see the motorway buried. This is raw capitalism. Next bout of arrogance comes with the spending of \$80 million during a recession to create a Rugby World Cup "party" at the newly acquired Queens wharf. Auckland is now a rich tourist destination pursuing excellence going forward as the transparently barbaric global city. The poor victims will be bulldozed off the wharf out of side of the World Cup revelers. In fact Hide is following the new right formula of the Business Roundtable to a T.

The new super city will stop providing any sort of social services or amenities because they are not its 'core



business' which is roads, drains and regulating brothels. Meanwhile, the numbers of jobs destroyed climbs along with the lives of those who are cast on the scrapheap. This reactionary banksters regime is penny pinching on money for job training in rural towns; cutting back on education for children with special needs; robbing Kiwisaver, robbing the Cullen fund, yet wasting over \$600 million in lost jobs and services to create a Superprofitcity playground for the super-rich and infamous.

Workers can see where the priorities of this regime are: deal with the recession with tax cuts for the rich and standard and cuts in the incomes and welfare of the poor. They are rubbing our noses in their supershity. Time to flush them off Queens wharf into the Waitemata.

Aussie Banksters

On the 'left' in New Zealand there is an old myth that NZ as a 'developed' country must be 'imperialist'. This means that the NZ capitalists invest their capital abroad (FDI) because they cannot make sufficient profits at home because of falling profits here. As part of this export of capital, NZ would then import big profits from other countries, e.g. China, to accumulate in NZ. That would mean the development of NZ banks to handle the accumulated profits and then re-export them back to repeat the process. There is a lot wrong with this theory, but the obvious flaw in the argument is that there are no sizable NZ owned banks. Kiwibank is what used to be called a savings bank to provide workers mortgages or run up credit when their miserable wages run out. But profits are not accumulated by capitalists inside NZ. Just like the FDI of foreign investors in NZ who make their profits here and ship them home. Typically FDI in NZ asset strips rather than invests in producing value. Anyway, when NZ FDI goes offshore so usually does the company because that's where the markets are also. It may take some time or they may go suddenly. Take Fisher and Paykel. Most of its production of 'whiteware' is now overseas in Thailand and Mexico. The 'cornerstone' shareholding of the Chinese Haier group in the company is to buy its intellectual property.

Not surprisingly NZ is not noted for big profits extracted overseas. Rather its noted for exporting profits from FDI inside NZ owned by foreign investors. And this is exactly



the role of the Australian banks. They siphon up wages, local profits, and interest from the NZ market and repatriate their profits to Australia. And no-one in NZ can do a thing about it because NZ is basically owned by US, British and Australian imperialism. That makes NZ a powerless semi-colony. Just how powerless we can see from the refusal of the Government to put any real controls on the Australian banks. The Reserve Bank borrows from the US Federal Reserve to provide funds to keep the Australian banks running. The Government guarantees any major bad debts of these banks. Yet it is unable to regulate the exorbitant interest that these banks screw out of NZ. Imperialist? Yeah right!

15 hour minimum for all!

Unite union launched its \$15 an hour minimum wage campaign in June.
Matt McCarten, National President said:

"Hi...On the 11th June we officially launched our \$15 an Hour Campaign for a Living Wage. We invited the main candidates in the Mt Albert by-election to come and answer our members' questions. It was great to see politicians (in front of a numerous reporters and cameras) having to answer some pretty tough questions from the 200+ Unite delegates and members..."

...The wealth gap in New Zealand continues to grow. This [Statistics NZ map of incomes by suburb](#) shows that working people in poorest Auckland areas have their real incomes grow by just 3% in 15 years. Those in wealthy suburbs saw their income from employment grow by 39%. In real dollars that means the 38 cents an hour more for the poorest and \$7.45 for the richest.

This is only the beginning though. Over the next two years we will continue to hold the blowtorch to the politicians about raising the minimum wage. The next eleven months will see us collect over 300,000 signatures on our petition. Everyone will then get a chance to vote on raising the minimum wage to \$15.

We must build a movement that politicians simply cannot say no to. Unite union played a key role in getting youth rates abolished and raising the minimum wage with our Supersizemypay campaign. That resulted in large wage increases for many of our members - \$3 an hour in some cases. We can do it again. If we succeed with a \$15 an hour campaign over 400,000 of the lowest paid kiwi workers would get an immediate wage rise.

That's worth fighting long and hard for."

While it is certainly worthwhile using the petition to get people signed up to the union, it is misleading for Matt McCarten to suggest it will "hold the blowtorch to the politicians" and produce two years later the same increase in the minimum wage as the Supersizemypay campaign did. It was that militant campaign in workplaces that got the minimum wage increased last time.

Members of the Waitemata Branch of Unite! have been collecting signatures for the petition while leafleting the West Auckland WINS offices. But for us it is more important to recruit workers now and meet the crisis head on through militant union action. So far Unite! Central has not taken on board the need to unite employed and unemployed.

One way of doing this would be to extend the demand for the minimum hourly wage of \$15 to all workers, employed and unemployed. The



unemployment rate is rising rapidly. The Minister of Social Development is unwilling to allow couples to split their incomes and apply for the dole when one loses their job and the other is earning over \$500 a week. Funding for training unemployed is being cut, while McDonalds is getting wage subsidies to 'train' burger hands!

Earlier this year a forum was held at Auckland Trades Hall on the plight of immigrant workers in the current economic crisis. On the panel was Laila Harre, National Secretary of the NDU, who called for the formation of a union to organise the masses of unemployed that the crisis is creating. Also on the panel was Mike Treen, 'director' of Unite! union and Auckland rep on its Management Committee, who significantly omitted to inform her and all present that organising the unemployed was a principal aim of Unite! when it was founded in 1999. Since that time the founding members of Unite! in Auckland, in particular the late Roger Fox, who went on to form the Waitemata branch of Unite, have insisted on recruiting unemployed and beneficiaries as well as low paid workers.

Now that another National led government is in power and the boom of the millennium's first decade has proved illusory, it is time for Unite! to remember its origins. Workers who sign up to Unite! should remain as active members with equal rights when they lose their jobs or go on a benefit. The unity of the employed with the unemployed is the key to fighting back against this crisis. Waitemata Branch has been giving a lead by leafleting WINZ offices and talking to recently unemployed, long term beneficiaries, and workers on job training schemes.

Australia: Stop Racist Attacks on Indians

Australia has received some bad publicity recently. Indian students have been frequently bashed and Indian students are angry. They have every right to be. They claim they are a victim of racism and we agree with them. The authorities are, of course trying desperately to deny the racist character of these attacks. They say that these students are merely a victim of crime because they “appear vulnerable”. Well how is it that of all the vulnerable people attacked in recent times, a disproportional proportion of them are Indian? Because the attackers have a prejudice is the obvious reason. There are plenty of vulnerable people using public transport in Melbourne.

In Australia law and order issues are state issues. But this time Rudd is promising action. Why? Because billions of dollars in trade are at stake. Australia stands to lose not just the many millions which come from the tertiary education industry, other trade with Asia or elsewhere could be at stake. China, for example has made complaints against attacks on Chinese students hinting that it may look elsewhere if something isn't done. Both Rudd and Liberal leader Turnbull are nervous.

The ruling class may not like these attacks but they and their parties must take responsibility for the racist political environment out of which they were created.

Australia had a white Australia policy up until the early nineteen seventies. This was abolished for two reasons: Asian labour was required and it was believed Asians would be more compliant and the White Australia was a barrier for expanding interests in Asia and the Pacific. Since then Australia has adopted a “multicultural” image. Well in most communities people of different ethnic backgrounds are tolerated. In some communities people of different ethnic backgrounds get on very well. But the hard cold facts are that people from non-Anglo descent, especially those from Asia or the Pacific are at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. They are the most exploited and lowest paid. Only the Australian Black people are lower.

In the nineties and earlier this century, the Howard Liberal Government consciously played the race card. He promoted hatred against refugees and those from the Middle East, usually from Lebanon. The victimisation of those from the Middle East was linked to the US promoted “War on Terror”. Australia was, and is a loyal ally of the United States. All sorts of legislation was passed which could have been used against any leftists, but were in practiced used against those of the Islamic faith whose national origins are in the Middle East. Moslem youths suffer from persistent state harassment.

The treatment of refugees has been horrific. Many were dumped in detention centres some in the Central Australian desert. Others were dumped on Christmas Island and Nauru. The barbaric consequences of this are well known. Many have attempted suicide or suffered from mental illness. Their only crime has been to flee reactionary regimes such as the Taliban's Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein's Iraq and more recently the Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka. Howard's treatment of refugees

though opposed by many who would consider themselves “politically correct” was supported by Labor with only minor tactical criticisms. Labor introduced the detention camps in the first place. Howard politicised the issue.

Howard's agenda was to bribe sections of the labour aristocracy and the middle classes to accept his economic rationalist agenda. Howard raised the spectre of Australia being invaded and his tough measures needed to rescue the country. Whilst large sections of Australia were “proud

to be Aussie” Howard introduced serious attacks on the union movement and cutbacks to the private sector. Recently Liberal leader Malcolm Turnbull has made some tentative objections to Rudd being too close to China and tried to cash in on anti-Chinese sentiments. He realised that he couldn't complain too loudly though as Chinese trade was the key reason for Australia doing better than other countries during the world wide recession.

Howard created this racist environment with Labor's backing. The problem with letting the racist genie out of the bottle is that you don't know where it is going to strike. It appears that lumpen Australian's have decided to target Indian students. We would not be surprised if these attacks are inspired by fascists who have been campaigning against Asian and foreign students for decades.

It is the responsibility of the workers movement in Australia (and everywhere) to fight racism. This means action. This means workers defence. Indians in this country must be defended unconditionally. A workers movement against racism is long overdue. A barrier to this movement has been a trade union bureaucracy which promotes “Aussie jobs” objective at the expense of Asian jobs. The struggle to defend jobs must be international. These bureaucrats sell out wages and conditions in the name loyalty to Australia. A communist leadership must be forged to challenge the chauvinist politics of the bureaucrats.

Australia is both a colony of imperialist powers Britain, the United States and Japan. It also has a small mini-imperialist domain in the South Pacific and South East Asia. On the whole most Australians identify with this imperialism and therefore the superexploitation of Asian and Pacific Island workers. This is the materialist basis of Australian racism. We, the revolutionary class conscious working class must show Australian workers that their interests lie in unity with Asian and Pacific workers and not with the Australian bourgeois. Australian workers have a material interest in breaking from racism.

Australia was established as a white settler colony. It was established by the conquest of the Black indigenous peoples including Kooris Murrils and Nungahs. The Black people suffer from this conquest to this day. Life expectancy is seventeen years lower than that of non-indigenous Australians. They have a high rate of unemployment and imprisonment. In an invasion known as the Northern Territory intervention, Australian troops and cops are occupying communities in the Northern Territory. Black people deserve a decent future. This invasion must be fought. [from RED/Communist Left]



IRAN: For a Revolutionary Party

Iran in the last few weeks has been in a political ferment as tens of thousands mobilised around the dispute between the two leading factions of the Iran national bourgeoisie who both represent the rightwing Islamic regime that came to power in 1979. This dispute is about how best to control the masses and how best to gain control of a share of Iran's wealth in significant deals done with Japan, Germany, Russia and China. The spark that ignited deep dissatisfaction against the Islamic regime among youth and organized labor was what they saw as an election stolen by Ahmadinejad. The mass rallies and repression then escalated over several weeks into a major crisis in which a more politically conscious element came to the fore and raised the demand for the end of the ISI (Islamic regime) and for a 'democracy'. At this point Rafsanjani began to make overtures to Khamenei to restore social peace and defend the Islamic regime. We argue here that workers need a revolutionary leadership to complete the revolution that was betrayed and smashed in 1979. There is no halfway house of 'democracy' that does not become a 'slaughterhouse' of the masses. The revolution must be 'permanent' and for that there must be a revolutionary party and program based on the Leninist-Trotskyist program of 1938.

The revolution betrayed

Iran has long been a strategic prize for imperialism as a historical power pivotal between Europe and Asia. The imperialist countries squabbled over Iran early in the 20th century. Today this rivalry is hotting up again as the structural crisis of the global economy is bringing about a renewed period of inter-imperialist rivalry. At stake are Iran's oil and gas resources (second largest reserves in the OECD) and access Central Asian oil. The British lost control of Iran oil when Mossadegh came to power after WW 2. But as he moved toward the USSR he was overthrown by a US sponsored coup in 1953 and the pro-US Shah installed. A national revolution against this US puppet rose up on 1979 but was diverted by the reactionary Islamic clerical bourgeois faction led by the Ayatollah Khomeini into a counter-revolutionary Islamic regime.

The tragedy of the 1979 revolution showed that Iran was ripe for revolution but [lacked a revolutionary leadership](#). The workers and poor peasants were the force behind the anti-Shah revolution, but were led by liberals and Stalinists who allied with the Islamic national bourgeoisie who by 1981 had turned on the most advanced workers and exterminated many thousands of the best militants. The failure of the socialist revolution can be clearly blamed on the role of the Stalinist Tudeh party which following the fatalist Stalinist line of making a democratic revolution in alliance with the 'progressive' bourgeoisie to kick out the imperialists. The Stalinists refused to learn from their betrayal of the revolution in China in 1927 when their 'ally' and honorary member of the Comintern, Chiang Kai Shek, turned on the Communist Party and massacred its leadership.

Playing an equally bad role but this time adventurist rather than fatalist, the Maoist and Guevaraist guerillas thought that they could spark off a popular insurrection that would take over the historic role of the national bourgeoisie. Of course the Islamic leadership obeyed its own laws of motion, its collective hip pocket, and despite the anti-imperialist rhetoric, recognised that its class interests lay in doing deals with imperialism, and so

turned on and smashed not only the treacherous leadership of the working class, but the heroic vanguard.

Today, nearly 30 years after the Islamic clerical counter-revolution, we have a split in the Islamic bourgeoisie between two factions who are squabbling over their share of the profits from the privatization of state assets and FDI in oil and gas assets. Both factions are committed to wholesale privatization and a greater role for FDI in oil and gas production.

The dominant faction, that of Khamenei/Ahmadinejad is a rightwing populist faction that continues to follow the Islamic 'revolutionary' principles of the 1979 revolution. It mobilises the rural and working class poor around an Islamic nationalism against US imperialism and Zionism in a bloc mainly with Russia, China, India etc, along with the Bolivarian states, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador. Its nationalist rhetoric is designed to suppress resistance on

the part of Iran's poor workers and peasants who have suffered massive cuts to their living standards under Iran's IMF-supervised structural adjustment program.

The other faction, around Rafsanjani/Mousavi is no less committed to privatization and DFI in the economy, but presents a more liberal program of social welfare and protected living

standards. It is based on the urban middle class and some sectors of workers and favors a modernized Islamic state that can do deals with 'democratic' EU and US imperialism. Most prominent in support of the opposition against the existing regime are the university students and prominent union activists in the Teachers Union of Iran and the Teheran Bus Drivers Union, both of which have suffered repression of strike action from 2005 to the present.

Who does the reformist left back in this fight?

Those who see the US as the main enemy (or like Petras see the US as a pawn of the Israelis) back the rightwing populists because they think they are genuinely anti-imperialist. This is a lie. The regime is not anti-imperialist. It uses anti US and anti-Zionist sentiment cynically to control the impoverished masses. In principle the regime has no objection in doing deals with the US and UK but since these countries have imposed the UN



economic embargo on Iran, they play the role of foreign “devils” to arouse nationalist sentiment. They play this role well being the two powers who have dominated Iran in modern history. Today they lead the attack on Iran’s nuclear program. UK banks have frozen Iran’s accounts. The US pressures Sarkozy to boycott Iran. This has lost the French Total a major oil and gas contract which has gone instead to China.

Germany, however, has broken ranks and is stepping up its FDI in Iran, mainly to provide technical development in oil and gas production. It is desperate to get gas from a source other than Russia. Iran moreover is very keen to develop the “Persian Pipeline” to take its gas via Turkey to the EU. Japan, also a major imperialist power, is a major export partner. Not only that, Iran is open for business with Russia, China, India etc., a powerful bloc of nations, including Japan, increasingly drawn into economic competition with the US and EU. Most of FDI in Iran developing its oil and gas resources today is now Chinese. Russia refuses to stop cooperating in Iran’s nuclear development. Thus the anti-imperialism of the ruling faction is a smokescreen to contain the masses while the Islamic bourgeoisie pockets its oil and gas profits.

This is why the leadership of the World Social Forum backs this faction. Chavez has come out (on Alo Presidente on 21 June) in support of the Iranian populists. “We send a greeting to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran’s great president, to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and to the Iranian people. We ask the world to respect Iran because they are trying to undermine the Iranian revolution’s strength.” This shows that the Venezuelan Bonapartist recognises his class interests are the same as the right wing populist Ahmadinejad. Chavez sees the ability of the Bolivarian states in pressuring US imperialism to reduce the costs of the crisis of finance capital being downloaded on the semi-colonial world as strengthened by the bloc of states allied to Russia, China and Iran. It doesn’t matter that the regimes in these countries are rightwing populist or state capitalist Bonapartist since what is critical is containing the masses behind an anti-US imperialist wave of public opinion so that an anti-US bloc of states can put pressure on the US ruling class towards ‘multilateral’ or ‘multipolar’ world.

Those who think that imperialism can be democratic and peaceful back the modernizing faction. As we have seen Rafsanjani/Mousavi are no more anti-imperialist than the present regime. However, they are openly aligned to Obama and the EU as what they see as ‘democratic’ imperialists. This explains the widespread sympathy for Mousavi and the claim that the election was rigged by all those liberal and ‘social democratic’ and left movements in the imperialist countries.

The left leg of the WSF (IMT <http://www.marxist.com/iran-regime-steps-up-terror-general-strike-needed.htm> etc) covers for Chavez support of the right populists by backing the ‘democratic’ rights of the protesters, covering Chavez naked backside with the call for a national democratic front in the form of a “constituent assembly”. They hope to “pressure” the WSF popular front to the left as Chavez tends to the right. They do not see their position as contradictory as they operate with the concept of the popular front that pretends that the working class can prevail against the bourgeoisie in a Bonapartist regime.

Alan Woods of the IMT explains Chavez’ support of Ahmadinejad as a “mistake”. Similarly, he does not think

that James Petras is deliberately attacking Iranian workers. He too is “mistaken”. What is their mistake? The mistake is to think that Iran is like the populist regimes in Latin America. According to Woods, Iran is an Islamic dictatorship. The regime is a military Bonapartism not a Latin American populism. What Woods fails to see is that Chavez and Petras are correct in essence. Venezuela and Iran are essentially the same despite their surface appearances. And for that reason they are forced to expose the reality under the appearances. Both regimes are forms of Bonapartism which attempts to include the poor masses directly as the ‘subjects’ of the revolution. In Latin America it is a ‘popular front’ for Bolivarian revolution; in Iran it is an Islamic Republic.

The concept that unites all of these regimes and reveals their popular front character is that of the Marxist concept of Bonapartism. A Bonapartist regime is one that claims to be ‘national’ rather than class based and draws its support from a declassed ‘populism’. The Marxist concept of ‘popular front’ is a class critique of ‘populism’ which exposes the role of the ruling class in disguising its class interests with a ‘classless’ formula. Such regimes range between ‘left’ Bonapartism such as Chavez when the leader is able to contain the masses by social reforms, to ‘right’ Bonapartism such as Ahmadinejad, where counter-reforms are imposed upon the masses in the ‘national’ interest. Thus in the last analysis, Bonapartism is a bourgeois regime that is necessarily pushed to the right as imperialism imposes the costs of its global crisis onto the semi-colonial world. The role of Bonapartism is to divert the working class from independent self-organisation to face the onset of the fascist counter-revolution.

Like the fake Trotskyist left leg of the WSF, the Iranian pseudo-revolutionary left generally supports the modernizers against the ‘dictator’. They recognise that while both factions are part of the ISI but the opposition has set in motion a popular fight for democracy to bring the 1979 ICI regime to an end. For example the Workers Communist Party of Iran is a small party that has many supporters outside Iran including Iraq, and is very active on the internet. It takes a reformist posture adhering to a stageist conception of the revolution. In Iraq for example it called on the UN to replace US imperialism under the illusion that the UN would represent ‘democratic’ imperialism.

In Iran the WCI raises immediate demands but does not call for socialism yet. That comes later...

<http://www.wpiran.org/English/english.htm>

This is a dangerous position as it does not prepare workers for the insurrection. It does not explain that their 10 immediate democratic demands which include freedom of assembly, release of political prisoners and end of torture etc., cannot be won short of a socialist revolution. It does not explain how workers need to be organizing and arming now to win that revolution. Therefore to the extent that it influences the vanguard, it runs the danger of repeating the betrayal of the Tudeh and the guerrillaists of 1979.

What should revolutionaries do in this fight?

Revolutionaries back neither bourgeois faction but instead back the fight for the political independence of the working class. We explain that there can be no national independence from imperialism without the

working class leading that fight all the way to socialism. For this we need a program for a real Socialist Republic.

Our program is first, to defend the democratic rights of workers, peasants, students etc to vote, to demonstrate, for freedom of expression in the media and on the streets etc. This includes freedom of all political prisoners, freedom of religion, opposition to Sharia law, etc. Without these democratic rights it is not possible to organize openly an independent working class movement.

We also defend the national rights of Iranians to be free from the oppression of imperialism but say that only a Socialist Republic can do this.

To that end we form a united front with those who are protesting the outcome of the election whether or not it was rigged, but without an ounce of political support to the modernizers who have illusions in imperialism. We do not renounce this fight for democratic rights under the delusion that this weakens the rightwing populist credentials as anti-imperialist. As we have seen this is a fraud. The regime is making deals with Japan and Germany every month. And while Russia and China are not imperialist powers, there is nothing progressive about these regimes that we would defend in a war with the established imperialist countries.

Second, we demand a program that will meet the needs of workers, peasants etc particularly facing an economic crisis and state repression, for jobs for all, a living wage, decent housing, education and social security.

Third, we say to workers that to win these democratic rights, to organize an economy that can meet workers needs, it will be necessary to take power. Workers must strike and occupy their workplaces, arm and defend themselves. There can be no compromise with the bourgeoisie of any faction. No trust can be placed in any

of the institutions of the state, especially the military and the justice system.

Fourth, this means that workers have to organize their own assemblies around workplaces and universities, and coordinate regionally and nationally. We call on poor peasants to organize their own "shora" and for the ranks of the military to organize their rank and file "shora".

These "shora" have to be defended by armed workers, peasants and rank and file soldiers.

Inside these "shora" revolutionaries have to fight for the leadership around a Leninist-Trotskyist program of world socialist revolution to defeat the traitors of the world social forum.

For a Workers and Poor Peasants Government

Finally, to express the interests of the workers, the poor peasants and students, we call for the formation of a Workers' and Poor Peasants Government, i.e. the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

We do not accept that to mobilise the forces for revolution that the main demand should be to call for a Constituent Assembly which is a form of bourgeois regime that recognises the right of the bourgeoisie to have an equal vote with workers. This is a Menshevik concession to Stalinist stagism and a vote of no-confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the working class and its vanguard. In isolation of workers self-organisation the Constituent Assembly entraps workers and poor peasants inside a bourgeois regime.

A Workers' and Poor Peasants' Government is the Government of those classes who are exploited by the bourgeoisie, and of the petty bourgeoisie who prove themselves loyal to the revolution. The only form of Socialist Republic that we recognise is the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

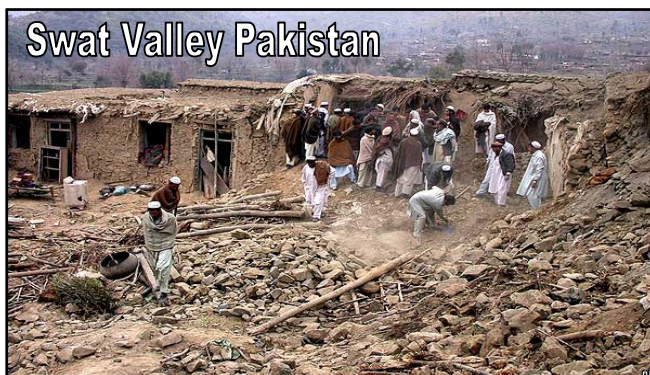
Obama's Wars

No New Viet Nam War in Afghanistan and Pakistan!

Oil Industry Tool Obama Fosters Mass Murder of Pashtuns and Creates Nearly Two Million Refugees in Swat Valley! Workers can stop him - and we must!

US imperialism is demanding that the Pakistani government take control of the Swat Valley using whatever military means are necessary, even if that means slaughtering the civilian population in the area. Bringing a halt to the progress of the anti-intervention front, which has advanced to some 60 miles from the capital of Pakistan, is critical to the interests of the US and its allies. They must maintain control over Pakistan in order to permit construction of a planned oil pipeline that will cross Pakistani territory on its way to a new port being built on the Indian Ocean. The crumbling governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan are in desperate need of support from Washington, so they are complying with US demands. The resulting intensification of imperialist intervention in Pakistan also brings to the front long-

unresolved issues of agrarian reform, national liberation for the Pashtun, and basic democratic demands of the masses. The resulting conflict has exploded over the Swat Valley.



concepts, into an anti-interventionist front. The emergent neo-Taliban is the only source the Pashtun people can look to to provide armed resistance to the American-backed governments that have long since abandoned their needs, concerns, and safety. The neo-Taliban has not shed its reactionary character, but in a land without justice or protection, it provides a pole of

The arbitrary border between Afghanistan and Pakistan means nothing to the Pashtun, whose tribal lands were long ago bisected by British mandate. In recent days, that border has collapsed, as the former Taliban has morphed from an exclusively Afghani reactionary movement, based on archaic theological

attraction for the oppressed Pashtun in their efforts to resist the seemingly unending deluge of military intervention from the West. The recent murderous bombardment by the Americans, via their proxy Pakistani army, has only resulted in strengthening the neo-Taliban's influence among the civilian population.

Only the most cynical and reactionary western observers still believe NATO intervention in this area is truly a battle against "terrorism," or a fight to bring democracy to those who have been living under the rule of the Taliban. Deeper geopolitical interests are in play. One driving force behind this conflict is the intention of Western oil interests - Unocal, Chevron, and Halliburton - to build a north-to-south Trans-Afghanistan oil pipeline across eastern Afghanistan and through Pakistan to the Indian Ocean. Another is Washington's need to encircle the emerging capitalist giant China, which if left unchecked will challenge Washington's dominance as the predominant world imperialist power over the next two decades.

Last week, the respective "Presidents" of Pakistan and Afghanistan, Zardari and Karzai, took orders from Obama to suppress and/or eliminate opponents of the Trans-Afghanistan pipeline. To suit Obama's view of the "National Security Interests of the US," those Afghans and Pakistanis who do not want a Western-controlled pipeline running through their homelands must be pacified, removed, or offered a deal by imperialism. Construction of this pipeline is contractually stipulated to begin next year. Hence the sudden step-up of the slaughter.

Tens of thousands of new Pashtun homeless have been forced onto the roads of Waziristan this week. They are heading for bulging refugee camps that already "house" as many as a million and a half refugees. Meanwhile, police troops roam the roads and camps shooting suspected Islamists, because Zardari is anxious to please the imperialists so as to consolidate their tentative support for his regime.

The "spin" would have us believe that the slaughter is limited to the Swat Valley. Not so. While the Pakistani army wreaks havoc in the Swat Valley, the American army continues to slaughter the peasants of Afghanistan. The number of civilians killed by American airstrikes in Farah Province last week comes to 149, according to the peasants' own handwritten list of relatives killed in the bombardments. All this shows without a doubt that the Obama regime's intervention in Afghanistan and Pakistan is escalating, accompanied by massive brutality. US imperialism can only maintain its domination through military force. Obama is thus exposed for what he is: just another imperialist politician, who is just as willing as Bush was to escalate the carnage inflicted upon the masses in Afghanistan and Pakistan, if that is what it takes for US imperialism to hold onto its power in the region.

Meanwhile all of Waziristan is subject to air attack by the Pakistani Air Force, which claims to have killed 800 militants as of May 13th. We don't really know whom they've killed, but we do know these bombings are indiscriminate, are killing civilians, and are driving angered residents into the ranks of the neo-Taliban. The overall killing is the combined work of the Pakistani Army and the imperialist army. Here's why: Predator drones, those robot airplanes with small video-guided missiles, have killed over 700 people this year in the course of eliminating a mere 14 (fourteen!) "Al Qaeda leaders" in

Pakistan. The pundits and liberal supporters of the "good war" are stumped to explain the numbers. The casualties are already stressing the Pakistani medical system to the breaking point.

Socialists have no desire to see the reactionary Taliban take power and submit the population to a repressive theocracy. But the defeat of the imperialist forces and their Pakistani proxies will aid the struggles of the workers and the oppressed all over the world. It is our first duty to call for the defeat of our own mighty imperialist forces. We call for a revolutionary struggle to drive imperialism and its local capitalist allies out of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and pave the road to self-determination, peace, and dignity for the Pashtun people. Ultimately, only the socialist revolution, and a socialist federation among Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and the other countries and peoples in this region of the world who are fighting for self-determination, can really resolve the democratic aspirations of the people in the area. For this to happen, the Pakistani working class, in alliance with the peasantry in Pakistan and Afghanistan, must lead the struggle to oust imperialism from the area.

Meanwhile, within the imperialist countries and especially the US, labor must take the lead in the antiwar struggle. Defeat of imperialist warfare is too important to the working class to be entrusted to the traditional liberal/pacifist "peace" movement, which fell silent as soon as the prospect of a Democratic Party presidential victory appeared likely, and has not been heard from to any meaningful degree since Obama took office. Protests led by students and pacifists were not enough to stop the Viet Nam war. To stop this slaughter before many more lives are lost, we need **LABOR ACTION NOW**, in the streets, on the docks, and at the front lines! Those with the real power to end it through **militant direct action** include workers in transportation, and the rank and file in uniform.

- **Transportation and logistics workers:** Organize in your union to "hot cargo" (refuse to handle) munitions and other supplies destined for use in the slaughter of the Pashtun peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan!
- **Soldiers in the U.S. and on overseas bases:** **Refuse deployment** to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan - and all other areas that US imperialism seeks to control!
- **Soldiers already deployed:** Hold mass meetings to discuss how to refuse criminal orders! Build a "let's go home" movement that can lead strikes against a criminal war that is killing people who are fighting to defend their countries against imperialist intervention, as well as innocent civilians!
- **Workers everywhere:** Support these efforts by organizing and leading mass protests demanding immediate, unconditional and total military withdrawal from Afghanistan and Pakistan! Demand the withdrawal of mercenary trainers and covert special operations forces from both Afghanistan and Pakistan! Expose Obama's "Big Green Lie" and demand abandonment of Big Oil's pipeline project across Afghanistan and Pakistan! Demand massive aid for the refugees!

Statement by Humanists for Revolutionary Socialism

Workers of General Motors: Occupy and take control of your workplace!

The dismantling of the American auto industry, the US government's bailout of a bankrupt GM, and the deal being cut with the UAW to savage a diminished workforce, if carried out according to Obama's plan, will be a historic defeat for the working class, with far-reaching consequences. The UAW leadership, which long ago abandoned class struggle methods for classic business unionism, knows it can save its bureaucracy's privileged position, which enjoys all the perks of Stalinist-era commissars, by selling out the membership, cutting the workers' pay and benefits, and accepting mass lay offs. Meanwhile, there is not even a glimmer on the horizon of the new industrial jobs desperately needed to build the "green economy."

The American auto worker's pay and benefit package (known as the "gold standard for labor") was won by hard-fought battles on the picket lines, backed by heroic acts of solidarity on the part of tens of thousands of union members, together with their families and communities. Victory could not have been achieved without efforts such as the six-week factory occupations at the Flint Chevrolet and Fisher Body plants in 1937, and the "Battle of the Overpass" at the Ford Motor Company's Rouge Complex later that same year.

Those historic battles ended in victories for the entire working class, as other industrial and manufacturing workers set their sights on, and fought for, equivalent benefit packages to those won at the "Big Three." American workers became accustomed to the promise and expectation of vacation pay, lifelong medical benefits, pensions, and a "decent" paycheck. The working class became redefined, in the public discourse and in workers' own consciousness, as a new "middle class." Ironically, in part because of their own past victories, workers no longer identified themselves as a class condemned to sell their labor power to the owner of the means of production. The Marxist concept of class, defined by relationship to the means of production, had been displaced in workers' minds by a concept of class defined by income level.

Meanwhile, a witch-hunt was loosed upon the left within the unions, resulting in the displacement of left-leaning organizers by "loyal" careerists, and even criminals, as union officers. Workers had little natural sympathy for the majority Stalinist left that was still trying to peddle the class peace they had sold the UAW in wartime, so no one noticed the "speedup" at first—or so the story goes. Consequently, business unionism displaced militant trade unionism, and "labor relations" became both an academic discipline and a profession committed to binding labor to capital. The end result was a

commitment to capitalism, on the part of the rising cadre of business union bureaucrats, that labor had stopped playing hardball. The crimes of the turncoat labor parasite caste against workers here at home are outweighed only by their role in tying the subjective allegiance of American workers to the overseas exploits, wars, and military interventions of imperialism. These labor fakers traded on the workers of the world for their bowl of porridge. ***We must demand and fight for a democratic rank and file leadership, with wages and benefits capped at the level of the best paid workers in the union!***

Busily selling the "middle class" hype to their members, these labor "leaders" never seriously challenged the Taft-Hartley Act (which, among many other anti-labor provisions, prevents unions from launching sympathy strikes). Our dues and energy should have been used not only to force the repeal of Taft-Hartley, but also to organize the unorganized, educate our membership, build strike funds, and launch a fighting Workers' Party. Instead, for decades the unions' parasitic rulers wasted our dues dollars and volunteered our energy electing Democratic Party "friends of labor," who can't ever deliver anything of real value to working people (e.g.,

the ERA, single-payer health care, EFCA, etc.), and who have promoted—and billed us for—every imperialist military action in our history. Meanwhile, generations of labor leaders became accustomed to living the good life along with their corporate counterparts. Now, today, when labor needs to recapture its



needs to recapture its militant traditions and to fight like hell, ***the UAW leadership is giving it all away without a shot being fired.***

General Motors has announced it is firing another 29,000 American UAW members. Workers fear for their pensions; they see their neighborhoods abandoned to foreclosures; schools and the social safety net are being destroyed. And what do the "friends of labor" in the White House and Congress have to offer these and the other millions of unemployed? Despite the fact that between them, the UAW and the US government will own a large share of "New GM," neither the union nor the federal government will be making any use of the leverage this could give them over the company's future plans.

Revolutionary Marxists do not advocate the nationalization of industries under the control of pro-capitalist governments, rather than under the direct control of the working class. But workers should be told the truth: that the Obama administration, despite its ostensible commitment to the environment and to creating badly-needed "green economy" jobs for US

workers, has bent over backwards to avoid even the slightest appearance of nationalizing the company for the benefit of society as a whole. Instead of taking an active role in setting a new direction for New GM, the Obama administration has made it clear that all will remain business as usual. The government will assume the risk, but retain no decisionmaking power; the workers will make the lion's share of the sacrifices; and any eventual profit will go straight into the pockets of management and the shareholders.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration boasts in its Fact Sheet on the GM deal that: "[t]he UAW has made important concessions on compensation and retiree health care. . . . In virtually every respect, the concessions that the UAW agreed to are more aggressive than what the Bush Administration originally demanded in its loan agreement with GM." Among other things, the \$20 billion that GM owes the UAW for retiree pensions and benefits will not be paid.

Instead, the existing pension and benefit trust will be replaced by a new trust that will be given a bunch of currently worthless stock in New GM. This places the UAW in a total conflict of interest with its own members. If the value of New GM stock does not go up, the stock owned by the pension trust will continue to be worthless, and UAW retirees will lose their benefits. But in order for the stock value to rise, New GM will have to make as much profit as possible—on the backs of current UAW members! That is, the UAW's bureaucracy, as one of the owners of New GM, has a direct interest in increasing the exploitation of the union's members in order to raise the value of the pension trust's stock!

To make matters worse, even though the trust will own 17.5% of New GM, it will only have the right to select one independent director, and will have none of the other normal shareholder rights. In other words, instead of taking advantage of its position as one of GM's major creditors to demand that New GM remake itself into a source of green economy jobs, the UAW has given up any claim to having a say in the company's future that is proportionate to the trust's ownership. Meanwhile, the only "green economy jobs" measure to which GM has agreed is the token concession that it will use *one* idled plant in the US to build a new small car model. This will increase GM's domestic production by a measly four percentage points.

Who Stands to Gain?

GM's secured lenders, who stand to benefit from the bankruptcy deal, include Citibank and JP Morgan Chase. These and the other organs of global finance capital have historically exploited and oppressed our brothers and sisters in Africa, Latin America and Asia even more than they have US workers.

Consider all those cell phones, ipods, laptops, and other high-tech toys. Much of the metal for their components came from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). JP Morgan Chase, through its major share in Anglo American Mining has been extracting these metals from the DRC in competition with other banks. The result has been an ongoing war in the DRC since 1996 which has killed over 4 million people.

And working people should never forget that it was Citibank which financed the 1973 overthrow of the democratically elected government in Chile. In the course of that coup, Pinochet and his goons herded thousands into stadiums and executed them.

Obama talks about "change" and a "new beginning," but what we see is the final nail being placed in the coffin of the "gold standard of labor" by the unholy alliance of Obama, the UAW leadership, and representatives of big finance capital like JP Morgan Chase and Citibank.

Stagnation of the US economy and falling profits

For the past 20 years, the rate of inflation may have been kept nominally low, but in real terms, workers' wages have fallen. In the struggle to maintain and keep their families afloat, workers resorted to taking loans against their homes, and got into hock up to their ears to credit card companies at usurious rates of interest. What did the banks do with the surplus cash they extracted from workers as interest? Unless it was invested, this capital would have had no value. The banks found these usurious loans and the "financial instruments" that were derived from them more profitable than actual productive investment, thus they offered more and more loans. After the market crash in 2000, the banks were forced to lend at cheaper rates. To make the same profits their shareholders had become accustomed to, they had to issue more loans. A saturation point was finally reached where workers could not afford any more loans, and started to drown under this excessive debt. At the same time, unsecured speculative lending and recklessly risky investments in derivatives left banks wildly overleveraged.

Now the US, European, and Japanese governments are bailing out the banks to the tune of trillions of dollars. But this means nothing in the context of a stagnant world economy. In order to extract more profit from the working class, we see the beginning of inter-imperialist rivalry that threatens to explode on an international scale as the race for raw materials and cheap labor pits the imperialists against each other. The massive displacement of manufacturing facilities into China and third world countries, to exploit the lower wages there and reap the benefit of the consequent higher rate of profit, has cut like a scythe through the gains of working class in the rest of the world.

The crisis of the banks and the overall economy is so great that mass unemployment, which has risen to 9% in the US even by official estimates (meaning the real rate is closer to 16%), has not been enough to "stop the bleeding" and increase profits. These western finance capitalists running the US government, who have not hesitated to resort to wars, coups d'état, and punishing workers abroad, are now turning their guns on the American worker, stealing from our pensions, depriving us of medical care, and shredding the safety net for the poor and indigent.

What can workers do?

The Chapter 11 bankruptcy of GM has just been declared; there is still time to intervene!

We call on workers to **organize factory committees** to coordinate an **immediate occupation of all GM plants** and dealerships! Tear up the six-year no-strike pledge!

We can have no faith in the sell-out leadership of the UAW; only a revitalized democratic rank and file movement can lead us out of the crisis! An emergency delegated conference of representatives of factory committees must be convened to **elect an entirely new union leadership**.

Working class communities around the factories should be mobilized to **defend the occupations**; workers will need

to prepare for self-defense against the reaction of the state!

The demand that will mobilize the rest of the working class to take solidarity actions must show the way out of the economic crisis. Therefore we must demand:

Nationalize GM under workers' control and without compensation! Open the books to give workers full access to all financial information about their company! Workers must take control of all "bailout" funds used to shore up the company. **Not a single worker should be laid off.** All work should be shared among all those who can work, without loss of pay.

But we need **workers' control** to make this happen. It is only under workers' control that the **auto plants can be transformed and retooled** to manufacture the infrastructure for green power (e.g., wind turbines, solar panels, and electric vehicles) and clean and ubiquitous public transport (e.g., electric bullet trains and light rail systems). The workers could hire any specialists, such as engineers and designers, that they deem necessary to assist the transition.

Occupations of auto factories aimed at implementing these demands will inspire the entire working class to follow suit, and will be a beacon to the workers of the world, even in China. The international economic crisis is propelling the working class around the world, in countries like France, Greece, and Peru, into massive struggles. If the UAW rank-and-file undertake mass actions like sit-ins; if they fight for workers' control and confront the state and its forces of repression as they did

in the 1930s, this will provide inspiration for every worker in the world, particularly the many workers in the semi-colonies who produce parts for GM. Nothing could be more inspiring than seeing a key sector of the workers in the belly of the beast take the lead in the struggle to smash US imperialism.

Around the world, every workplace needs to set up factory committees, and these committees need to be united with delegate council meetings in each industrial area, right up to national and ultimately international level. Such structures would be the precursor to the launching of a **fighting workers' party in the US** that unites workers across nations, one that sees the struggles of the workers around the world as their own. This is a scenario out of which the Fourth International can be reborn, and all the power of JP Morgan Chase and Citibank be shown for naught, to be as fictitious as the capital their paper accounting purports to represent.

The capitalist class long ago ceased to be progressive. Only the working class has a material interest in rational planning for progressive growth of the productive forces. Capitalist anarchy is all that stands in the way. The time has come for the US working class to put its stamp on events and take a lead in the international struggle against capitalism.

In this struggle, the Humanists for Revolutionary Socialism, the Leninist-Trotskyist Fraction and the Workers International Vanguard League will be your allies!

New Caledonia: Free Jailed unionists!

On June 11 New Caledonia's mainly Kanak USTKE union has suspended its unlimited strike to consider a mediation proposal. The mass protest was organised as part of a series of strike actions opposing the domestic airline, Air Caledonie's decision to dismiss a Kanak employee and its refusal to pay the union members for strike days. Like the other French territories of the Antilles, the native inhabitants of this French colony are still treated like second class citizens.

There is a long history of Kanak independence struggles, in which a many deaths have occurred. Independence fighter Eloi Macharo was assassinated by military snipers in 1985, and Jean-Marie Tjibaou was shot dead in 1989 by a freedom fighter in revenge for his part in making peace with France after the Ouvea massacre in May 1988. 300 elite French troops stormed a cave in northern Ouvea to rescue 16 gendarmes captured two weeks earlier by Melanesian freedom fighters. Nineteen Kanaks died in the assault, several executed after being

wounded and taken prisoner. Not one gendarme was hurt. New Caledonia remains what the UN calls a "non-selfgoverning territory" of France, with a referendum on independence to be due to be held between 2014-2019.



Kanaks are often victimized in the work force. In this case the USTKE union is taking strong action following a blatant case of victimization. The strike was called off after three days of disruptions, with petrol stations in Noumea running out of fuel. There were numerous police interventions to secure access to schools and installations, such as the public radio. Now the union is being criminalised for striking. On June 29 Gerard Jodar and 28 others were sentenced for disrupting air traffic during a mass protest at Noumea's domestic airport the previous

month. A number of other members of the group were handed down jail sentences to begin at a later date, while the remainder of the group were given suspended sentences.

Zimbabwe:

The revolution betrayed - drawing the lessons

The mistakes made by the International Socialist Organization-Zimbabwe (ISOZ) can be traced back to the reformist politics of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of Britain. The SWP and the trend of the International Socialists (IS) all distort Trotsky's position on entrism into a Labour Party. This semi-permanent entrism into not only Labour parties but also bourgeois nationalist parties, has at its centre the watering down of the revolutionary programme, with the resultant opportunist politics. The opportunist politics of the ISOZ in Zimbabwe has played a major role, if not the major role, in the betrayal of the revolution in Zimbabwe. We place the responsibility for the betrayal at the feet of the British SWP and the IS trend, as at all times the ISOZ looked to them for political leadership and guidance.

On the so-called dual nature of reformism

The SWP justify their entry into capitalist reformist parties by the following: *"We in the IS Tendency understand that reformism is a contradictory formation that both expresses and contains working class struggle. Relating to it means knowing how to work with and against people to our right- with them when they want to fight against the bosses and the regime, against them when they hold the struggle back."*(letter from Alex Callinicos to ISOZ, responding to a request for advice on how and when the split with of ISOZ with the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) should take place : May-June 2002 Socialist Worker-Zimbabwe).

But, working together with reformists in a united front and entering a capitalist reformist party are 2 completely different things. A United Front is a temporary front for a specific purpose in which all the participants maintain their separate identity and discipline, while we 'strike together' against a common enemy. We can break from it at any time.

To enter a capitalist reformist party means subjecting yourself to the discipline and programme of capitalism. This creates illusions in such a party and undermines the fundamental principle of working class independence. Such entrism is thus generally permitted into a Labour/workers' party only when such party is in the process of formation before its programme is fully established; it is also normally of short duration as the clash of programmes (revolutionary versus reformist) would lead to a split; it is also possible in the case of a reformist labour party in the process of formation, that the revolutionary group wins the day, resulting in a mass revolutionary party. The MDC was never a labour/workers' party as from the beginning it had capitalist representatives. It had been initiated and funded by imperialism from the beginning.

It is not a question of being *'with the reformists when they fight the bosses and the regime'*, but a question of exposing at all times in the eyes of the working class that the reformists cannot be depended upon to wage a fight against the bosses and the regime to its end.

In fact at times of revolutionary upsurge of the masses, the capitalists class are forced to put reformist leaderships forward to head off or side track the masses from the revolutionary path. This is the central reason why the capitalist class needs a Popular Front at a time that its traditional capitalist parties have been discredited in the eyes of the masses.

Thus the question of maintaining working class independence at all times, and especially not forming part of Popular Fronts, is so crucial. How else will the masses see the importance of independent working class action, if false hope is placed on reformists to act against 'the bosses and the regime' and in this case, of putting hope of reformists in a capitalist party to act against 'the bosses and the regime'.

The masses also need to learn about the capitalist nature of Popular Fronts. Popular Fronts are in essence reformist capitalist parties that base themselves on support from the trade unions, either directly forming part of them (through ex-trade union leaders forming part of their leadership and/or in alliance with the current leadership of the trade unions).

The masses need to learn about the nature of the middle class and about the middle class nature of the leadership of the MDC, Zanu-PF and other pro-capitalist parties. To support the reformists when they appear to act against the bosses and their regime is to help contain the masses.



In the heat of the fire of the 1917 Russian revolution, when the threat of counter-revolutionary military coup by General Kornilov against the interim government led by Kerensky, was raised, the Bolsheviks led the fight to put down Kornilov.

The Bolsheviks used the opportunity to openly arm the masses, in other words, to advance their own programme, not to ease for one second any criticism of the Kerensky government that they had; they

correctly analysed the class nature of Kerensky, that he and the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, were not consistent fighters against Kornilov and were, behind the scenes and sometimes openly, cutting deals with the counter-revolution (Trotsky: *History of the Russian Revolution* book 2, see Chapters on Kornilov insurrection and Bourgeoisie measures strength).

The SWP would have supported Kerensky, by even joining his party, against Kornilov, as they have supported a vote for Zuma in the April South Africa elections (just because of the promise of free education). Bolsheviks support the masses against Kornilov and for the struggle for free education while warning the masses about the Kerensky's and Zuma's of the world. The SWP supports Tshivangerai against Mugabe, instead of the masses against the Zimbabwe state, instead of at the same time exposing the middle class nature of Tshivangerai. The SWP policy of duality of the reformists acts as a containment, a brake on the revolution of the working class. It is not for nothing that Trotsky said that the experience of entrism into

the British labour party had yielded more negatives than any gains.

Watering down of the programme

The entrism supported by the SWP, is not only based on watering down of the revolutionary programme under the guise of being close to the masses, but leads directly to opportunism and tailing the consciousness of the masses: In 2002 Callinicos asks the ISOZ: *"How much has changed since you joined the MDC? Crucially, are the most advanced workers and activists in the process of breaking from it?"*

The ISOZ in their letter to the MDC (8 April 2009) point out that the MDC Bridge programme was in fact a structural adjustment programme of the IMF, yet Callinicos, having seen this letter, still asks: 'How much has really changed?' Thus for the SWP, the programme of the MDC does not matter; all that really matters is where the so-called advanced workers are.

The ISOZ points out that scope for criticism in the MDC has all but vanished and all the SWP is concerned about is that the fact that the ISOZ has a parliamentarian in the name of the MDC, makes the timing of the withdrawal 'critical'. The SWP sees it as 'odd' for the ISOZ to depart even though the MDC has adopted the programme of the IMF! Trotsky in his 1932 discussions on the Labour Party question in America was clear:

We cannot stand before the masses with 2 banners, one cheaper ticket and a first class ticket. At all times we have to have one banner and one programme. The SWP has no problem for the ISOZ members to be associated with the IMF programme and at the same time with a 'revolutionary' programme. The ISOZ, under the guidance of the SWP presented a second class ticket (a watered-down programme) and a third class ticket (the capitalist programme of the MDC) to the masses.

But the political mistakes do not start in 2002 when the ISOZ, to their credit, initiated a break from the MDC. They start in 1999 when the MDC was formed.

The revolution starts in Zimbabwe; SWP betrays

The 1980 transfer of power to Zanu-PF meant that Mugabe became the favoured agent for imperialism in Zimbabwe. Although minor aspects of the economy were nationalized, the bulk remained in the hands of imperialism. The 1980's were characterized by heroic fights by the world working class but these ended in defeats of the working class by Thatcherism and Reaganism; on local soil the uprising of the peasants for land in Matabeleland was brutally put down in 1983-4 resulting in the death of about 20 000 peasants and their families.

The protection of the rule of imperialism-capitalism was perpetrated by the armed forces of the Zanu-PF and supported by North Korean troops. The support of US imperialism for the massacres was also implied by the fact that they gave open military support to Mugabe right up to 2001.

The stagnation of the world capitalist economy resulted in imperialism-capitalism creating various mechanisms to shift their crisis onto the working classes of the world; structural adjustment programmes were forced onto the Soviet bloc of countries as they were in Africa and elsewhere; the cutbacks on social expenses contributed to the uprisings of the working class in the Soviet bloc countries which resulted in the restoration of capitalism there although the Stalinist world apparatus was shattered- a new market for imperialist exploitation was opened.

Even this was not enough to bring imperialism out of their crisis. Everywhere the cutbacks on social expenses and privatization of the means of production were being resisted by the working class. In Africa country by country was forced to adopt structural adjustment programmes, and here too resistance by the working class limited the plans of imperialism. In Zambia the resistance of the masses was so great that imperialism created the MMD (Movement for Multi-Party Democracy) led by former trade union general secretary, Chiluba, to head off the uprising and direct it into parliamentary channels.

In Zimbabwe the Structural Adjustment programme was formally adopted in 1991, although cutbacks on social expenses has started before this. The cutbacks on social expenditure went hand in hand with the collapse of the local agriculture as self-sufficiency in food production was replaced by single crop commodity-for-export production.

The imperialists forced the creation of new markets for their processed food and other products on the bones of the peasantry, the workers and the unemployed. From 2002 to 2007 the food monopolies exported US\$ 400 million in 'aid' to Zimbabwe, on the back of the deliberate collapse of local agriculture.

The old bureaucracy (aligned to the Zanu-PF) in the ZCTU (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions) were overthrown in 1988 when the stagnation of the economy had already taken serious proportions. In 1994 there was a general strike against the effects of structural adjustment; by August 1996 revolt from the masses burst into open rebellion; a form of workers' councils, labour forums, became widespread and these meetings of rank and file worker delegates called and ran the strikes over the head of the trade union bureaucracy.

The open revolt of the Zimbabwean working class at the same time of world economic crisis in 1997 posed an international danger for imperialism- they had to head off the revolt by any means necessary. The danger was that this revolt may spread to South Africa and any other part of the world. The new trade union bureaucrats placed themselves at the head of the strike wave and turned it into a wave of 5 day stayaways instead of 5 day factory occupations, thus actively discouraging factory seizures. The trade unions offered no solution, while the working class demanded a united fight against the state and their system.

In the absence of a deep tradition of a Communist Party, in the context of the restoration of capitalism in the East bloc countries and with the ISOZ being only a handful of activists, the formation of a Labour Party was placed on the agenda.

The ISOZ correctly, under these circumstances, called for the formation of a workers' party and attempted to provide a left pole around which the working class could rally. The WIVL condemned the MDC as a reactionary organization, created by imperialism to head off the revolution. While this was true, WIVL's call should have been linked with the call for a workers' party and this critique (of the MDC) taken into movement leading up to the formation of the MDC as a party.

The centre of this critique should have been to break the working class from the capitalist party, the MDC, and to call for an independent labour/workers' party. In this sense that the WIVL was not for the ISOZ to call for a labour party within the labour forums and making propaganda for this (counter-posing the workers' party to the MDC) among the base of workers discussions that were debating the 'people's convention' (the fore-runner of the MDC), our position was sectarian.

The ISOZ entered the MDC, creating illusions that it was a workers' party when in fact it was a capitalist party. To its credit when the MDC had adopted the economic programme of the IMF, the ISOZ initiated a split from it in 2002. The ISOZ leaders also acknowledged that the MDC had already isolated them as far back as 2001. Thus even in this split from the MDC, the ISOZ were tailing developments. The MDC is not a United Front but a Popular front as it had capitalist representatives in them from the beginning (such as Eddie Cross of the Zimbabwe Chamber of Industries).

Despite the failure of the WIVL to call for a workers' party in Zimbabwe at that time, that the SWP directed the ISOZ to not to pose certain critical transitional demands, to not openly warn the masses of the treacherous nature of Tshivagerai and to stay join and stay in the MDC and build the Popular Front, means that WIVL was to the left of both SWP and ISOZ. While the WIVL position was sectarian initially, the SWP position was opportunistic through and through ('Entrism requires patience' wrote Callinicos, as he argued in 2002 for the ISOZ to remain even longer in the MDC).

After 2 failed attempts to build reformist parties in Zimbabwe, imperialism finally realized they needed the support of the trade union bureaucracy as they had in the case of Zambia. In order to head off the revolt, imperialism funded the calling of a people's convention in 1998-9, leading to the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) to be formed in September 1999. The British Tories funded the formation of the MDC while the imperialist Frederick Ebert Foundation funded the formation of the NCA (National Constitutional Assembly) and actively promoted Tshivangerai as its leader.

The NCA was a major player in the calling of the 'People's Convention', and thus in the formation of the MDC. The SWP failed to warn the working class of the counter-revolutionary aims of those who were leading the setting up of the MDC, instead they merely referred to it then as an 'enigma' (mystery). They failed to direct the ISOZ to expose this from the very beginning. Clearly, at this stage, the SWP gave support to Tshivangerai, instead of supporting the working class and warning them about him.

Further, no call was made to set up soviets or workers' councils as the main basis to unite the struggles and to make attempts to win over the army. The call for soviets would have created a basis to counter-pose this workers' assembly to the 'people's' assembly being led by the capitalists.

Further, the ISOZ programme at the initial stages of the formation of the MDC, before its programme and structure had been finalized, was defective in a number of ways:

1. There was no call for the expulsion of all capitalist representatives from the 'People's Convention' and thus from any efforts to form a worker's party; this fight would have helped to expose the true capitalist nature of the MDC and facilitated the development of a workers' party in opposition to it - a successful battle on this front would have meant the setting up of a labour party- not a guarantee of a revolutionary party, but the first step to take independent political organization of the working class forward; in the absence of even raising this demand, the SWP, through the ISOZ created, if not supported the illusion that the MDC was a labour party and not a Popular Front
2. There was no call for the formation of soviets or the transformation of the labour forums into soviets;
3. There was no call for the formation of a workers' militia (which Trotsky in the 1938 discussions on the Labour party emphasized as an essential part of a set of transitional demands to be presented by Fourth International groups entering labour parties);
4. There was no demand for an end to unemployment and a sliding scale of hours;
5. there was no call for a workers' and peasants government, ie a workers' government which has the support of the poor peasants
6. while there was a call for nationalization - this was not linked to expropriation of imperialist assets without compensation, under workers control of production.

In short the programme of the ISOZ was a left bourgeois programme, a minimum programme. This shortcoming is to be blamed on the SWP and the IS tendency, who have access to all the writings of Trotsky and Lenin, and should have given direction to the ISOZ.

Trotsky warned in 1938 that the formation of a labour party shows that the class conflict is sharpening and that the capitalist class would prepare a fascist option if necessary. He went further to warn that the programme that we present should be transitional and not a minimum programme. Trotsky said in the 1938 discussions on the labour party *"we also have the possibility of spreading the slogans of our transitional program and see the reaction of the masses. We will see what slogans should be selected, what slogans abandoned, but if we give up our slogans before the experience, before seeing the reaction of the masses, then we can never advance."*

Further he said: *"These demands are transitory because they lead from the capitalist society to the proletarian revolution, a consequence insofar as they become the demands of the masses*

as the proletarian government. We can't stop only with the day-to-day demands of the proletariat. We must give to the most backward workers some concrete slogan that corresponds to their needs and that leads dialectically to the conquest of power."

Thus the posing of a minimum programme by the SWP for the entry of ISOZ into the MDC, not only disarmed the Zimbabwean working class but also the ISOZ itself. This meant that the ISOZ presented 2 reformist programmes to the working class, the ultra-cheap MDC ticket and the 2nd class ISOZ one. This resulted in confusion in the minds of the working class. If a transitional programme had been presented by the ISOZ in the beginning stages of the formation of the MDC to help expose it, this would have drawn the class line between the ISOZ and the MDC. This might have led to a quicker expulsion from the discussions of the ranks of the People's Convention but at least the working class would have seen the revolutionary programme that the ISOZ stood for and the masses would know which door to come knocking on when the analysis of the ISOZ became reality.

But a more positive outcome could have developed, namely that the ISOZ could have grown as a revolutionary pole for the creation of a labour party as opposed to the MDC, with a possible development into a mass revolutionary party- this would have placed the ISOZ in a world historic leading role in the struggle for Socialism. Of course, analysis is always easier with hindsight but the importance of this analysis is to draw the lessons for the world proletariat so as to clarify our tactics and strategies for the present and future.

The degeneration of the ISOZ

In the March 2000 elections, the ISOZ put up a candidate (Gwisai) in one of the working class neighbourhoods, Highfield, in Harare. He had been scheduled to stand in central Harare where there were capitalist factories in the constituency. Due to pressure from the capitalist elements the ISOZ then shifted the candidacy to Highfield. With an approach of forming soviets and a workers' militia, and considering the militant mood among the masses at the time, they should have contested the central Harare constituency. But even in the Highfield constituency, no attempts were made to form workers' councils or even the beginnings of a workers' militia. This was part of the ongoing opportunist adaptation by the ISOZ (under guidance of the SWP) to the capitalist order.

From 2000 up until the present date, the fascist crackdown against the working class by capitalism imperialism, through Mugabe, has intensified. While the selected land invasions by Mugabe's rich peasant base took place, his troops stood guard over commercial farms, factories, shops and mines owned by imperialism. The response of the National Co-ordinating Committee of the ISOZ to the fascist crackdown was to place faith in the church: *"we could start with prayers at designated local churches followed by marches and protests from the churches led by the pastors and leadership of the movement"* (NCC statement 11.06.05, Harare).

In the run-up to the June 2008 presidential elections a pre-revolutionary situation existed in Zimbabwe, the masses had voted earlier in the year, despite huge intimidation by Mugabe's fascist gangs, for the MDC; at one point one of the military heads of Zanu-PF fled to South Africa citing that 75% of the armed forces were against Mugabe; when the masses started to turn even against Tshivangerai, who did nothing to mobilize the masses to arm themselves in self defence, the ISOZ was still mobilizing support for the MDC: *"we are demanding a constitution that enshrines basic socio-economic rights and labour rights and ensures their enforceability centrally through a constitutionally guaranteed budgetary system as illustrated by the Venezuelan constitution."*

Whereas the ISOZ initially opposed a government of national unity they now called for *"speedy finalization of the current ongoing talks for a government of national unity"*. (Fortune Rera ISOZ NCC 20 Nov 2008- letter to WIVL).

On the 23rd Sept 2008 Gwisai presented his analysis of the current situation: *"we are cognizant that in the short term the*

possibility of massive mass action is slim.....we welcome the position taken by the ZCTU and NCA for a continued demand of a genuine people driven constitution and the holding of free and fair elections thereafter.....it is imperative that there be the urgent regroupment in a united front of the radical, anti-neo-liberal and left forces, including organized labour. We are hoping the coming Zimbabwe Social Forum in October provides a further platform for the remobilization of radical forces.....a united front struggleimmediately means....a new people's driven constitution..."

Although the ISOZ has now split into 2 fractions around Rera and Gwisai respectively, the above positions show that their position in essence the same: namely promoting faith in a bourgeois constituent assembly, instead of exposing at every step of the way that such processes, irrespective if they are worker driven, would not result in the demands of the masses being met. While the masses were in the streets and soldiers even left their barracks for the streets in support of the masses, neither fraction of ISOZ made any attempt at calling for workers councils and workers' militia. But then how could the ISOZ do this while they were still 'patiently' implementing the SWP position of support for the MDC, although supposedly 'critically'! Yet another example of the SWP marching with the reformists instead of with the masses.

The ISOZ and SWP support Chavez, who is cracking down on the Venezuelan working class and safeguarding capitalism there. They support the World Social Forum whose main aim is to divert the working class masses from revolution against capitalism.

Was it sheer coincidence that the wave of so-called xenophobic violence, against Zimbabweans and other black Africans, was swept up in South Africa at the same time that there was a pre-revolutionary situation in Zimbabwe? Did the imperialist utilize the nationalist sentiments in the petty bourgeois layers of the ANC and the desperation of the lumpen proletariat, to their advantage by creating fascistic gangs to destabilise the Zimbabwean masses and to divert attention of the rising masses away from the taking of power?

The mass attacks against black foreigners in South Africa took place in May 2008, weeks before the June Presidential elections in Zimbabwe. At the time there were over 1 million Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa (by far the largest group of refugees). The capitalist media fanned the flames of violence by openly showing front page pictures of a foreign worker burning while the police were laughing and doing nothing.

This handed a blank cheque to the fascist gangs to opportunistically act and sweep many workers along with them. The aim of the fascistic violence against black African refugees was 3-fold: Firstly to destabilize the Zimbabwean working class from launching a mass revolutionary uprising against the imperialist-backed Zimbabwean state; secondly, such an uprising could have had serious spill-over into South Africa, one of the key bastions of imperialism in Africa- the masses protests against the state and capital in South Africa could have intensified and opened the road to mass uprising in South Africa; thirdly, it could have provided a beacon to the rest of the working class in the world in the current global attacks by capitalism-imperialism.

The massive devaluation of the Zim dollar since 2002 was not due to 'farm invasions' but were a deliberate ploy by imperialism to starve the Zimbabwean working class, to break its spirit of resistance. The masses may be tired but the events of 2008 show that the Zimbabwean masses can never be written off, the masses will rise again. The dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy is another mechanism to shift the burden of the crisis of capitalism onto the masses in Zimbabwe. It was a vicious attempt by imperialism to break the fighting spirit of the Zimbabwean masses. This comes at a time when the value of the US dollar is less than the Zimbabwean dollar in real terms but the violence of world imperialism imposes an artificial value to the US dollar- one of the chief means of super-exploiting the masses of the world and a means to extract surplus value from the workers of the world.

The way forward

The first step for the members of ISOZ is to break decisively with the opportunist politics of the SWP and IS tendency and to make a public self-criticism available to the Zimbabwean working class. If this means breaking from the ISOZ or refounding it or forming a new revolutionary working class formation, it is not for us to prescribe to you.

Secondly, we invite you and the heroic Zimbabwean working class to join in discussions with the WIVL and the FLT (Leninist Trotskyist Fraction) to form an International Leninist Trotskyist Fraction as part of the process of co-ordinating the fight against capitalism imperialism from here onwards.

Thirdly, a programme of transitional demands needs to be developed for Zimbabwe for the current situation and we invite you to give the lead in developing such proposals. It is this programme that should be counter-posed to the Constitutional referendum, not calling for a no or yes vote for questions that may be manipulated to give no choice to the working class in any case.

The cornerstone of such a programme has been confirmed by the negative experience of the MDC, namely that to achieve the full democratic demands, can only be realized through the working class taking power in Zimbabwe, through the application of the permanent revolution. Such a programme can be the only way that an independent revolutionary working class party can develop in Zimbabwe, as part of the rebuilding/refounding a revolutionary International; we believe this to be the Fourth International. Shinga Mushandi Shinga! Qina Msebenzi Qina!

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Sri Lanka: The Tamil Question

We reprint this article here to further debate around its position on the Tamil National Question. Since we were not clear on the new wave position, we asked for clarification which we print here:

"We are for the 'Right of Tamils for Self-Determination' and that up to 'secession', but only for the right. We oppose striving of the Tamil Bourgeois to carve out a separate Tamil statelet and dividing the Sri Lankan working class, into Tamil and Sinhalese factions. Support the right, oppose the division! This is in absolute conformity with the principles of Marxism and the experiences of the past history of more than a century. We support 'the right to self determination' not with a view to aid the bourgeois project of 'secession', but with a view that existence of this 'right' and the 'freedom' to secede for oppressed national minority, would remove the ground from under the feet of bourgeois and its demand for a 'secession', which on the contrary is a divisive agenda, harmful for the international unity of the proletariat. Anyway, and with the same logic, the opposition to the 'right to self-determination, up to secession' is equally damaging for the proletariat of both nationalities, being an outright support for the oppressor bourgeois. The two extremes, thus, fall outside the precincts of the policy of revolutionary Marxism. We are for the 'right to self determination upto secession' but we are totally against the bourgeois agenda of secession. We call for the unity of the proletariat of all nationalities, to overturn the bourgeois." New wave editors, 4th July 2009

Sri Lanka: The Collapse of the Ethno-Nationalist Project of LTTE and the Tamil Question

Rajesh Tyagi/28 May, 2009

The ruthless suppression of the armed secessionist movement led by the LTTE, at the hands of Rajapakse government of Sri Lanka, has put to an end the 26 years old civil war on the island ongoing since 1983, between Tamil nationalists and the Sri Lankan establishment. The entire top brass of LTTE has been wiped out by the Sri Lankan security forces in cold blood under a pre-plan, simultaneously inflicting enormous sufferings upon the civil population. With this, the project for a separate Tamil homeland, proposed by LTTE in the northern and eastern parts of the island, has also lost the ground, almost completely.

The ethnic conflict took a toll upon around 80,000 human lives, before leaving the question of ethnic repression of Tamils, unresolved. The recent offensive undertaken by the Sri Lankan government to uproot LTTE has resulted in one of the biggest human tragedies in South Asia, over several decades. Apart from the cadres of LTTE perished in the war, stepped up since January 2009, 7000 civilians have been killed and 16,781 are wounded. Sri Lankan Army has lost 6,261 soldiers, with 29,551 injured and 2,556 permanently disabled. According to an estimate of UN, more than three lakh (lakh=100,000) Tamil civilians are trapped in the relief camps, virtual detention camps being run by the Sri Lankan Army. The 32 such camps in Vavuniya alone are home for more than 160,000 Tamil refugees. The government, during the military operation, is stated to have blocked even supplies of life saving

drugs to the population trapped in areas dominated by the LTTE.

Sri Lankan bourgeois, in order to defend its rule, has raised an army which is largest on the globe in proportion to the size of population of the country. It already had an army of 120,000 soldiers by 2007, which it had replenished with induction of 80,000 more young recruits, mostly Sinhalese, in 2008 alone. To recruit the Sinhalese youth, it had kept its military plans for a major conflict in complete secrecy. In addition, very low level of youth employment i.e. 22.4 percent of the total youth on the Island, facilitated the project of this mass recruitment to the Army. Without this fresh recruitment, the war itself and success achieved in it by the Colombo establishment was improbable. By keeping the war plans a secret, the Sri Lankan Government succeeded to lure the Sinhalese youth for recruitment in the Army and then used it as cannon fodder to win the war against LTTE. Even during the war the Rajapakse Government has banned all reporting of conflict from the war zone, while denying access, both to foreign and local media in the zone, with express motive to prevent a public outrage on the quantum of such huge casualties of human lives.

After wiping out the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government has unfolded its plans to further reinforce the already colossal armed force, by raising its strength to three lakhs, which would mean one and a half times of its present size. It is clear that the Colombo rulers are preparing themselves for the future challenges to their

regime from their eternal and the real enemy -the working class, emerging from all ethnicities on the island. It is the working class which would be made to bear the burden not only of the recent war, but also of the future plans of the bourgeois rulers to accentuate their rule through the strength of a colossal armed force at their disposal.

Sri Lankan island is habited by around 20 million people, out of which 16% are Tamils, spread over the northern and eastern part of the highland, 8% Moslems who are mostly Tamil speaking and rest of the 75% Sinhalese, who occupy the larger south of the island. After occupation of the island, British colonialists had transported Tamils from India to Sri Lanka, mostly to work as plantation labour in tea gardens. While the working class in Ceylon (as Sri Lanka was then known) was one of the most radical section of the world proletariat and had played immense role in the anti-colonial national liberation movement, through its party Lanka Sama Samaj Party (LSSP) and later Bolshevik Leninist Party of India (BLPI) whose members gave immense sacrifices, was illegalised in 1940 for opposing the war and fighting in the front ranks of the liberation movement, the Sri Lankan bourgeois did not play any role at all in the liberation movement. It remained an auxiliary to the British colonialism. Till 1946, Sri Lankan bourgeois did not have a party of its own. The bourgeois elite organised the United National Party only in 1946 on the advice of British colonialists, who bestowed upon it the political power handing over the establishment of Island to it in 1948, to look after their interests in absentia. Native bourgeois took power in Colombo, not as a leader of the oppressed nation or in a fight against colonialism, but as direct agent of Imperialism. Only demand Sri Lankan bourgeois raised was to dismember the Island from the Indian State so as to prevent the integration between the working class of Sri Lanka and India. It borrowed the readymade project of national development, like other decolonised countries, from world capitalism and thus failed to resolve even a single basic problem, including that of the nationality, ethnicity etc. Entrenched in the social crisis, and threatened by the revolutionary proletariat, it resorted to most reactionary elements, traditions and forces of the past for reliance and support to its regime. Its fragile regime, however, could stabilise itself again and again, in the face of uninterrupted crisis, for the betrayals by the leadership of the working class.

The strength of the LSSP, at the eve of transfer of power to native bourgeois by the colonialists, can be gauged by the fact that it emerged as the largest opposition to the government in 1948, where on its call, 50,000 people had gathered for demonstration against the transfer of power. The biggest challenge before the Sri Lankan government was thus to weaken the labour movement under the leadership of Trotskyist LSSP, which could be done only by dividing the working class on ethnic lines. The bourgeois has learnt this lesson from colonial legacy of divide and rule. Immediately after taking power at Colombo, the government of rightist UNP thus got passed

the most controversial enactment- 'The Citizenship Act, 1948' whereby the Tamil Plantation workers of the highland were deprived of the right to franchise and citizenship. While Tamil traders collaborated in that, the BLPI opposed the move. There were demonstrations against the unjust discrimination meted out to the Tamil workers. The government, however, answered them through organising a spate of most violent pogroms against Tamil civilians, through Sinhalese chauvinist groups. This Act has virtually sown the seeds of ethnic conflicts of the future between Sinhalese and Tamils.

In 1953, the rightist elite government of UNP, adopted an economic policy aimed at benefitting the rich, which led to a steep price hike. The LSSP mobilised the working class against it and called for a general strike. Working



class actions in cities found an unprecedented support among the rural poor and consequently the entire country came to a grinding halt. The government soon took account of the really grim situation. The cabinet met in emergency on a British warship then anchoring in Colombo harbour and reversed the economic policy without delay.

The proletarian action of 1953, had profound political implications. The bourgeois elite, fearing the strength of the working class, sought refuge in the outdated Buddhist legacy, in order to woo the petty bourgeois peasantry, with religious appeal. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) was thus organised under the leadership of S.W. Bhandarnaike, draped in Buddhist cloak, which took power in 1956 elections. It passed the enactments declaring Buddhism the state religion and the Sinhalese the sole official language of Sri Lanka. This further aggravated the ethnic divide among the two communities and this was the avowed purpose of the ruling bourgeoisie.

These were unfortunate times as the LSSP falling to the trap to the then bogus leadership of the Fourth International (FI) to which it was affiliated, under Michael Pablo and Ernest Mandel, had lost its orientation. With the re-stabilisation of capitalism on a world scale, the then leadership of FI, adapted to it and misdirected its national sections to adapt themselves to the political situation existing in their individual countries. Pablo and Mandel did not see any need for independent movement of the working class either globally or nationally. According to them under the changed conditions the old parties themselves would be forced to take to radical path. With this perspective, the LSSP shared the path with Stalinist Communist Party of Sri Lanka and entered into collaboration with the SLFP, and supported its government. In 1964, the LSSP members entered into the government itself along with Stalinist CP, demonstrating complete degeneration of the party. It made a United Front with Stalinists and SLFP which got landslide victory in 1970 general elections. It introduced few reforms like nationalisation of the plants still under the control of foreigners, and bringing down the drug prices, but the 1972 constitution prepared under supervision of LSSP leaders, not only restated the privileged positions of Buddhism as state religion and Sinhalese as sole official

language, it introduced quota for Sinhalese in admissions in Universities and employment in Public Sector.

The working class found the leaders of LSSP sharing the political rostrum with bourgeois, their mortal enemy and acquiescing in its policies. The working class was pushed to frustration and hopelessness.

The betrayal of the working class, on the part of LSSP, directly led to the emergence of communal forces like the Maoist Janata Vimukti Peramuma (JVP), and the separatist LTTE. In 1970, Rohan Vijeveera, organised JVP mainly from among the Sinhalese students and youth, with a program to bring down the coalition government of Bhandarnaike through urban armed resistance. The movement was soon crushed by the government taking toll upon the lives of more than 15,000 young activists. The JVP leaders retreated to hiding in rural areas, but were wiped out by the army. It then turned to parliamentary democracy and gradually shifted its position to Sinhalese Chauvinism rendering support to the bourgeois establishment. In 1980, three Trotskyist activists were killed by JVP.

The LSSP having illusions in bourgeois leadership, was kicked out by it from the United Front government. The 1977 general elections decimated the LSSP, with the UNP once again coming to power. UNP immediately started a wave of rabid liberalisation through economic reforms shifting burden to the shoulders of working class and savagely attacking its movement. In opposition to the policies of the UNP government, a strike of Railway workers began, which soon turned into a general strike. The government crushed this strike by jailing all labour leaders and organising lumpens on large scale to attack the strikers.

The failure of strike and the betrayal of the leaders of LSSP, created an environment of hopelessness and desperation among the working class and a defeatist mood took over for the time being, which accentuated with the stabilisation of the economy through liberalisation and reforms. Taking benefit of this general depression and disintegration of the working class the bourgeois UNP government, in order to further demoralise and weaken the working class, by widening the ethnic divide, once again resorted to anti-Tamil pogroms. The youth leagues of LSSP however were deployed to protect the Tamils from hoodlums, but in absence of an effective resistance from the working class, the State terror became the device to widen the ethnic divide. As the Tamil parliamentary opposition remained totally ineffective, activists in youth wing of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) the largest formation of Tamil bourgeois, organised itself into a militant wing and formed LTTE. Calling for a separate Tamil homeland LTTE engaged in armed conflicts and ambushed an army convoy on 23 July 1983, killing 13 soldiers. This resulted in new spate of anti-Tamil pogroms, where 3000 Tamils were massacred at the hands of Sinhalese chauvinist groups. Thus started the long drawn war at the island for which main responsibility lies on the shoulder of LSSP leaders, for their betrayal of the cause of proletarian revolution, which provided space for this war.

As for LTTE, since the days of its emergence, it remained a petty bourgeois organisation, with a limited and reactionary separatist program of a Tamil homeland. It attacked and killed the Sinhalese and Moslem poor at impunity and thus assisted the Colombo establishment in widening the ethnic strife among the working class of

both communities. It relied upon the same rabid communalism against Sinhalese working class, like the Sinhalese chauvinists did against Tamil workers. It started form a pseudo-socialist rhetoric, but soon found itself not only in the arms of local Tamil owners of Transport and Trade, but remained dependent upon this or that big foreign power, in addition to support from wealthy Sri Lankan NRIs. At one time it counted upon support of the Indian Government under Rajiv Gandhi and agreed to the IPKF, the Indian Security force to take charge in Sri Lanka, under Indo-Sri Lanka accord. The devastation it brought to Tamils in Sri Lanka is part of the history. Even after its abrogation, LTTE continued to curry favour with other powers. Its 2-3 million dollar annual budget continued to be financed by big powers. Out of this budget it could maintain a navy (sea tigers) and an air force in its embryo, which though was no match for the colossal power of Sri Lankan state and the Imperialism as a whole, which Rajapakse could mobilise against it. Even then, LTTE continued to appeal to the United Nations, a forum dominated by big powers in the hope to mobilise support of sections of big powers for its project of separate Tamil homeland.

However, these illusions of the LTTE, in big powers, proved fatal. The big powers, continued to play a double game, by assisting in aggravation of the crisis on the island and then seeking material benefit out of this crisis, manoeuvring between the warring parties, solely for their own political designs. In 2008, China sold weapons to Sri Lankan government for \$ 75 million, in 2007 India had supplied arms for \$21 million, in 2006 Ukraine supplied weaponry for \$ 22 million and finally Israel had sold arms for \$16 millions in the year 2000. China assisted the Colombo government by time and again deflating the international criticism of the mass civilian casualties committed at its hands on the island and in turn got a strong strategic foothold in Sri Lanka by wining access to key Sri Lankan port, next to world's premier shipping lanes.

LTTE never raised an issue against the acute exploitation of the Tamil Tea plantation workers in the highland. The concept of Tamil Ealem tossed by it remained through and through the idea for a bourgeois statelet on the island. This was the idea favouring the aspirant Tamil bourgeois who wanted to establish direct links to the world capitalism through its political power over the independent Tamil Ealem, bye-passing the bourgeois establishment at Colombo under Sinhalese domination. Many times it has repeated that the ideal for the Tamil Ealem are the 'Asian Tigers' i.e. the capitalist states, like South Korea and Japan. The whole idea of this dreamland of Tamil Ealem was to take hold of the statelet and then offer the cheap labour of its workers and peasants to the world capital. LTTE never proved itself distinct from the Colombo establishment, as far as its class and political character goes. In the region under its domination, it treated the Sinhalese minority in the same way as Tamil minority was treated in the south. Its dreamland of Tamil Ealem even if realised, would not have been different in any manner than the Sri Lankan State. More recently, it had taken resort even to a Hindu religious stance, making religious appeals to Hindu supremacists in India by shouting that the Sri Lankan security forces were destroying the hindu temples.

It was for its limited nationalist perspective, that LTTE failed to muster any support among the Sinhalese working class, or even among the Tamils in Tamilnadu. Instead of appealing to the world proletariat it continued to appeal

to the bourgeois states. However, the big powers-bourgeois states, on whose support it counted for its success, betrayed it at the crucial moment. Even the conscious sections of Tamil working class had turned their back upon its campaign for separate Tamil homeland, realising that it means nothing but another capitalist state. The limited support it could mobilise among the Tamil youth, cannot validate its otherwise essentially invalid program of establishing a capitalist Tamil statelet. The support behind it was in essence the result of failure of the working class leadership and its political crisis. Even this support base among the poor specifically among the working class was gradually eroding because of the proximity of the leaders of LTTE to the rich and the policies it adopted, in the areas under its control, favouring the rich while shifting the entire burden of the war upon the shoulders of the working class. As reports from the war zone show, LTTE leaders have ordered firing upon the fleeing Tamil civilians from the war zone.

In our epoch, there being no scope for any combined national project of working class and bourgeois, much less in the countries with a belated development, the slogan of national state has become obsolete, losing all its political significance. The struggle against national oppression and for national liberation, so far as it has meaning and relevance for the working class, is integral

part and subordinate to its historic task of social liberation. Segregated from the task of social liberation, the national question has no meaning at all for the working class. Only the rightist and centrist advocates of petty bourgeoisie still chant the sermons for dogma of nation-states, when the same has lost all revolutionary significance. For us Leninists, the theoretical meaning of the 'right to self-determination of the nation, even up to secession' has never gone beyond a formal recognition of this right and a political resolve on our part against the national oppression of minorities. We are strategic opponents of the demand of secession and division of states in statelets. These divisions run counter to the interests of working class and are the agenda of aspirant national bourgeoisie.

Doubtlessly, the cadres of LTTE have displayed utmost sacrifice and courage in this war against the Sinhalese chauvinist Colombo establishment, responsible for handing out ethnic discrimination and injustice to the Tamil minority. But this note of appreciation for the cadre, must not deter us from evaluating, from the standpoint of working class, the shortcomings of the politics of LTTE leadership and from calling into question the correctness of their perspective, under which this war was prepared and fought.

Discussion Document

On the World Situation

The capitalist crisis deepens and the international proletariat's fightback begins. The crisis can end either in the barbarism of new wars and fascism to smash the workers fightback, or with a new international leadership the workers fightback can be united and centralised and open the way to a victorious socialist revolution.

In the first months of 2009 the recession has deepened as the capitalists have imposed stronger attacks to make the workers and poor peasants pay for their crisis. In order to restructure global production to restore profits, the stronger capitals have are forcing weaker capitals into bankruptcies, closures, imposing massive job losses and higher prices onto the workers. The restructuring of the US auto industry is a classic case.

As workers respond to these attacks with fight-backs some defensive struggles have spontaneously become offensive struggles against capitalism. This resistance has alarmed the capitalists as they imaging the ghost of Marx emerging from his grave to lead capitalism's gravediggers to revolution. They know that a life and death struggle with the proletariat has begun. Yet in every case the capitalists have been able to prevent workers struggles from seizing power.

Why is this? In this issue of the International Workers Organiser we will explain why it is necessary to build an international revolutionary leadership to transform these spontaneous offensive struggles into successful socialist insurrections.

It is clear that the severity of the crisis and the measures already taken to restore profits, including making workers pay for trillion dollar bailout of banks and corporations, has exposed capitalism as a parasitic system of exploitation before the exploited millions. But the capitalists know that this is only the beginning. To restore their profits and capital accumulation they must destroy vast quantities of capital, drive down workers living standards to starvation levels, and fight many new wars to conquer and plunder the raw materials and labour power of the semi-colonial and colonial world. Therefore, the capitalists know that the proletariat cannot live while capitalism lives and will resist, so that to survive they have to contain and defeat the workers' struggles.

The first line of defence is the use the World Social Forum to contain the proletariats fightbacks, to divide

and rule, and isolate and defeat every struggle'. This is why it is recruiting new layers of bureaucrats to the treacherous labor leaderships that can devise new tricks, social pacts and agreements to make the proletariat bow down to the continued rule of imperialism and the national capitalists and to "accept" paying the for crisis by mass unemployment, starvation and misery.

The ruling classes know that they need to squeeze every last drop of juice like squeezed lemons from the union bureaucracies and all kinds of reformist parties to divert and contain the masses struggles. The purpose of the World Social Forum is to tie the masses hands in popular fronts, divert their struggles into parliaments, put their faith in leaders like Chavez and Obama, so that the capitalists have the time to prepare counter-revolutionary military attacks to decisively defeat

revolutionary insurrections such as those we have already seen in Bolivia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Gaza.

But many union bureaucrats, as well as Stalinist and social democratic parties have already exhausted their credibility in the eyes of the most militant workers. Therefore the ruling class has drafted the renegades of Trotskyism, claiming to be Bolsheviks and genuine revolutionaries, to take over the role of deceiving the workers into supporting bourgeois regimes and national chauvinist political fronts. Today the fake Trotskyists steal the flag of revolutionary Marxism to provide legitimacy to the discredited labor bureaucracy of the World Social Forum in support of bourgeois regimes in crisis in the name of “21st century socialism”.

These fake Trotskyists turned reformists block the road to revolution and prevent the international proletariat from breaking with the bureaucracy and with the bourgeoisie. They represent today the Stalinists and social democrats who in the 1930s played the same treacherous role. This is why Trotsky spoke of the capitalist crisis as reducing to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Just as it was necessary to overthrow the treacherous Stalinists then, today it is necessary to overthrow the treacherous fake Trotskyists. This treacherous counter-revolutionary leadership must be overthrown and replaced by a revolutionary leadership that can lead the international proletariat to fight against war, fascism and to seize state power.

EXPLAINING THE “BIG BANG” OF THE WORLD ECONOMY IN 2009

We have seen how the deepening crisis and developing working class fightback has posed a problem for the ruling class driving them to recruit new layers of pseudo-revolutionaries to contain the fightbacks so that capital can prepare for the fascist counterrevolution. The only way out of this is for a new revolutionary leadership to be built in time to replace the traitors and organize and unite workers struggles into the seizure of power. To do this, however, means developing a new revolutionary international with a revolutionary program to resolve the crisis as a world socialist revolution. This must be a program that separates the reformists from the revolutionaries.

The first thing that separates the revolutionaries from the reformists is explaining the crisis itself. How do we explain the deepening of the global capitalist crisis which we call the “big bang”? Bourgeois analysts call this phase since the beginning of 2009 the “the third wave”. For them it is a global recession resulting from the financial crisis. For them the price of commodities is explained by supply and demand. If demand falls then prices fall, if demand rises, prices rise. This means that the global economy is self-correcting as the international market comes back to equilibrium. This is why now that the central banks have provided huge state subsidies to the strongest banks and corporations, Obama and bourgeois politicians are saying that the crisis is already ‘bottoming out’ and the global economy on the way to recovery.

The fake Trotskyists and pseudo Marxist economists agree that the crisis is financial recession spreading into market

as consumption and production slumps. They explain this as a failure to state to regulate the market which has allowed the banks to engage in monopolist and speculative excesses causing the financial meltdown. They are angry that the financiers are getting bailed out by workers taxes and demand that the capitalist ‘nationalisations’ of banks and corporations become publicly owned assets. What this shows is that these pseudo Marxists have forgotten that the state is a capitalist state and that the crisis is one of intrinsic overproduction of capital which is independent of state regulation. Such a pseudo economics leads to reformist demands on national states to impose Keynesian or social democratic, and ‘21st century socialist’, state policies to regulate and manage the global capitalist economy in the interests of the masses.

However, for revolutionary Marxists, this is not just a recession. It is a deep recession caused not by financial crisis but by the systemic crisis of finance capital. Falling profits in production leads to an overproduction of capital so that money capital is invested in speculating on non-existing or over-valued assets. The collapse of these ‘toxic’ assets then sets in motion a repression which serves the purpose of devaluing all non-performing assets and labor power and of then concentrating and centralising them in the hands of the biggest and strongest banks and corporations backed by the biggest and strongest imperialist powers. This is what explains the falling prices of commodities, wages, shares and other assets, and the state bailouts of the strongest banks and corporate.

What the ‘big bang’ means is not just a generalised recession, but the trajectory of the recession turning into a global depression. The purpose of such a depression is to devalue raw materials and labor power to the point where the surviving banks and corporates can re-invest



excess capital profitably in production once more. For one thing the level of state subsidy is not sufficient to enable them to write off all their bad debts. Second, while making monopoly profits in the semi-colonial world from inflated food prices etc., these are not sufficient to restore the rate of profit in the corporate and banks. Therefore, far from a “bottoming out” of the crisis, the capitalist system cannot restore its profits without much deeper attacks on the living standards of the world proletariat and therefore a much

deeper political resistance of the masses on a global scale.

Thus the “big bang” signifies for Marxists a point in the deepening repression where the USA - as the dominant imperialist power - is forcing the world’s exploited masses, and its imperialist rivals - Europe and Japan - through its weaker banks and corporations, to pay for the crisis of US finance capital. The USA is able to do this because it has the biggest concentration of capital centralised in banks and corporations that are global in their reach, it has the most developed technology and therefore highest labour productivity, the biggest military and control over global raw materials and labor-power, and has already imposed big defeats on its own proletariat thus breaking any serious resistance to the US embarking on more imperialist wars and colonial adventures. However, while US imperialism has to do this to survive, workers to survive must fight back, and the

other imperialist powers must also defend their capitals. We are again living at a time when the essence of the imperialist epoch, that of wars and revolutions, manifests itself brutally.

EXPLAINING THE RULING CLASS ATTACKS TO TAKE BACK REFORMS

Thus we are already in one of those epochs of “great historical clashes” that Trotsky defined in his work “Class, party and leadership”. One of those convulsive historical times of war and the revolution, under which circumstances the revolutionaries can break the isolation and can unite the masses. For that reason, the beginning of 2009 ended up destroying all the claims of the reformists, who as parrots of the bourgeoisie, said in 2007 and 2008, that the world crisis does not exist, but it was about “necessary corrections” of the stock-market, or only a “bank crisis” or a “financial” crisis which was not getting into the “real economy”.

We can prove this against the reformists’ illusions that the crisis comes from the ‘wrong’ policies. Is it a “wrong” policy to make such ferocious attacks on the masses to take by force previous gains and social reforms. No it is deliberate plan to privatise state assets and to cut taxes that are a drain on profits. This is the “whip” of capital, the brutal attack that the exploiters have launched against the world masses in order to make them pay the crisis.

It is clear that the bourgeoisie is not in control of the crisis. It is not a rightwing conspiracy. It can only guess at how deep the recession must get before the conditions for profitability are restored. The panic behind the bailouts shows that the ruling class knows that the biggest banks like Citibank and Morgan Chase are too big to fail. They are prepared to nationalise these banks and corporate to prevent the collapse of their system. This is what explains the severity of the ruling class attacks on workers. We can see that they are prepared to copy the Israeli attack on Gaza “Operation Cast lead” and use it against the world proletariat: i.e. massive layoffs announced every day by Toyota, Volkswagen, Renault, Sony and dozens of other monopolies of the imperialist powers; persecution and a massive expulsion against the immigrant workers; high cost of living in the semi-colonial and colonial countries condemning them to hunger, etc.

We can see this in the former workers states where the Stalinist bureaucracy restored capitalism in the belief they would share in the booty of global capitalism. All their “reforms” are disappearing like confetti after a wedding. Imperialism wants to plunder what is left of the former workers’ property. The working class and the exploited people of those countries, especially Russia and China should look in the mirror of their class brothers and sisters of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. They should look at Africa plundered and oppressed by the imperialist powers in fratricides wars, genocide and massacre, through those power fights for the booty of the wealth sacking -today specially, the minerals like Coltan in the DRC. They should look at the semi-colonies and colonies in Latin America and Asia, devastated by imperialism’s plunder of gas, oil, minerals, farm commodities, fish, forest recourses, water, etc, and strangled by external debt, already paid many times over out of the blood and sweat of the workers and peasants.

So we can see clearly that the reformist illusions that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of its working class are lies. The king is naked: the crisis of the

capitalist world economy is forcing the capitalists to eat into the surplus value produced by workers of future generations. It is taking its profit transfusions from the blood of the children who are condemned to die in their thousands every day. It is taking its bailouts out of the mouths of children, of the remittances of migrant workers, and the pensions of the retired workers. The successive waves of the crisis have opened up a global depression and prove that the revolutionary Marxists are correct: for the working class to live, the capitalist system must die!

THE RULING CLASS PLANS TO DEFEAT THE PROLETARIAT IN A CIVIL WAR

The bourgeoisie is clearly conscious that a period of historical convulsions has started where the “social peace” between the classes is broken. It knows in order to save itself, it will have to smash the proletariat otherwise the proletariat will smash it. They have seen the workers and youth vanguards are no longer tied to the reformists. The Greek uprising of December last year showed that workers and youth can rise in a spontaneous rebellion that halts only because of lack of a revolutionary leadership. This means that already the workers and youth prove they can rise up in a small imperialist power. The bourgeois general staff are thinking ahead that maybe we are in a new 1970’s with a new Vietnam and a new Portugal. They see that uprisings in the colonies and semi-colonies can lead to revolutions in the imperialist countries. This is the prospect facing the French ruling class where a revolutionary process which begins in the colonies or former colonies can open the revolution in France itself.

The imperialists facing a depression that they do not control are nevertheless a thousand times more prepared for civil war than the proletariat itself which remains subordinated to various bourgeois regimes. The CIA chief appointed by Obama, said very clearly: “the international financial crisis is currently the No 1 threat number to the national security of USA (...) this new threat with its geopolitics implications is today more dangerous than international terrorism (...) the fall of the growth rate and the increased unemployment in all the world can lead to political instability and social unrest due to unemployment and the rise of poverty, directed at the USA.” (*Clarín*, Argentina, 22/02/09).

The bourgeoisie will stop at nothing. It uses all of its instinct to fight to survive when its private property is at risk. It will act with blood and fire to stop the socialist revolution even while the reformist betrayers are preaching the peaceful road to socialism. It has clear objectives and makes its plans well in advance. Thus, following Kissinger’s advice, the US imperialist ruling class, headed by Obama and the Republican-Democrat imperialist regime -the “Republicrat” - has started to strengthen all of the institutions its uses to dominate and control the world and to win the civil war. For example, the recent meeting of the G-20, the NATO summit, the Americas summit and the G-8 meeting which will be held in few months. Meanwhile the Obama regime keeps intact the military machine unleashed by Bush on Afghanistan and Iraq, and while talking peace, has the big stick ready to use against Iran and the DPRK.

For now the imperialists make as much use as they can of the social pacts of the labour and bureaucracy workers in the unions to make the proletariat to accept the imperialist bankruptcy and pay the crisis. But it knows that this is just buying time so that it can prepare the

reactionary offensive. Thus it prepares for the time when workers break out of the popular fronts such as Bolivia and South Africa and prepares Bonapartist regimes, new colonial wars and even fascism to smash the rising revolutionary threat. Just as the US gendarme in the Middle East used operation "Cast Lead" to smash the popular resistance in Gaza in December, imperialism is preparing to impose this military solution on a world scale.

As Trotsky said clearly the bourgeoisie uses fascism only as the last resort: *"The bourgeoisie is incapable of maintaining itself in power by the means and methods of the parliamentary state created by itself; it needs fascism as a weapon of self-defense, at least in critical instances (...) Nevertheless, the sober bourgeoisie does not look very favorably even upon the fascist mode of resolving its tasks, for the concussions, although they are brought forth in the interests of bourgeois society, are linked up with dangers to it."*

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1944/1944-fas.htm>
(Fascism: what it is and how to fight it)

THE MASSES MOVE TOWARDS THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

The bourgeoisie is preparing for civil war. The proletariat is not prepared. Its first response to the bourgeois offensive is a defensive struggle to maintain wages, conditions and political rights. Since 2007 those struggles have been contained by the reformist traitors who lead the working class organisations. Nevertheless under the crisis conditions, the destructive features of the imperialist epoch, war and revolution get deeper. The working class is pressed to go from defense to offense. The situation becomes objectively revolutionary. The question then is how does the revolution develop against the counter-revolution?

Trotsky said 80 years ago: *"The revolutionary character of the epoch does not lie in that it permits of the accomplishment of the revolution, that is, the seizure of power at every given moment. Its revolutionary character consists in profound and sharp fluctuations and abrupt and frequent transitions from an immediately revolutionary situation; in other words, such as enables the communist party to strive for power, to a victory of the Fascist or semi-Fascist counter-revolution, and from the latter to a provisional regime of the golden mean (the "Left bloc," the inclusion of the social democracy into the coalition, the passage of power to the party of MacDonald, and so forth), immediately thereafter to force the antagonisms to a head again and acutely raise the question of power."*

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1928/3rd/ti04.htm#p2-02>

Before December 2008 we have seen the proletariat in many different places in the world try to go from the defensive onto the offensive. In every situation that offensive comes up against the question of power. In Palestine, the masses come up against the pacts between Hamas and Israel. In Iraq the resistance comes up against the pacts between the puppet government and the US occupier. The Bolivian revolution was strangled by Morales and the Colombian resistance sold out by Chavez and the "Bolivarian" bourgeoisie. The Pakistan and Afghan national bourgeoisies have done a deal with Obama to destroy the Taliban. In every case when the masses begin to go on the offensive, the labor bureaucracy collaborates with the national bourgeoisie to do a deal with US or French imperialism to smash their offensive. But since December 2008 with the uprising in Greece, the counter-offensive has shifted into the

European continent. Then with the spread of the spark from Greece to the Antilles and Madagascar, the counter-offensive now threatens the imperialist heartland of France itself.

What marks a decisive shift in the counter-offensive is the spontaneity of the mass actions struggling to break free from the bureaucracy and the bosses. This means that the vanguard now sees that the reformists will not fight for them and they have to do it themselves. In France there were two general strikes in January and March, several factory occupations and kidnapping of bosses. The union bureaucracy cannot control these actions. Even the left bureaucracy of the NPA [New Anti-Capitalist Party] LO [Lutte Ouvriere] and Lambertism, which has taken the workers fights into the elections and negotiations with the bosses, cannot control them. At the Caterpillar factor in Grenoble, 250 sacked their officials shouting: "Now the workers decide and not the union delegates". Similar militant actions have taken place with occupations and demonstrations in German, England and Ireland. The threat of militant actions in Eastern Europe in the former workers states, which became trophies of capitalist restoration and the "end of history", but are now super-exploited semi-colonies close to economic collapse, shows that under these new conditions, workers can quickly go over from defensive struggles to offensive struggles.

It is clear, that facing the capitalist depression and facing the global "Operation Cast Lead" [after the Israeli military attack on Gaza in December 2008] of imperialism to download the cost of its crisis onto the exploited masses that the proletariat has begun to respond blow by blow to the offensive. It is clear that the proletariat is not willing to pay the costs of the crisis they did not cause. The workers recognize that they are in a class war and that to defend themselves they have to go on the counter-offensive. There is no lack of will to fight. The only thing that prevents the masses counter-offensive from going beyond a spontaneous, isolated and fragmented struggle, disorganized and demobilized, and becoming an organized and armed struggle for power, is the counter-revolutionary leadership of the workers organisations, the labor bureaucracy, the various shades of Stalinist and other reformists, and most of all the fake Trotskyists who pose as the high priests of "21st Century Socialism". Only by replacing this counter-revolutionary leadership with a revolutionary leadership based on a new world party of socialism will the world's workers be able to take advantage of objectively revolutionary conditions and overthrow rotten capitalist imperialism and open the road to socialism.

FOR THE REVOLUTION AGAINST THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

Against the imperialist's offensive to make the international working class pay for its crisis, we are now facing a situation where the most militant layers of the proletariat in many parts of the world are taking the counter-offensive. On the side of the workers we have a spontaneous pressure to turn defensive actions into offensive actions against both employers and the treacherous labor leaders. But the workers are still faced with the massive apparatus of the unions, and the Social Democratic, Stalinist and populist leaders now reinforced by the fake Trotskyists. Any shift in this balance of forces means breaking the barriers that the bureaucracy places in the road of the proletariat, and the emergence of a new revolutionary leadership to open the road to

revolution. So far this new leadership has failed to emerge.

The uprising of the Greek students and workers posed this prospect sharply as police stations were sacked, weapons were taken, and factories were occupied. But since the leadership of the uprising was incapable of posing an answer to the question of power, this offensive was contained. Similarly, in the French Antilles the workers broke through the barriers with a general strike, only to find a new set of barriers imposed on them by the fake Trotskyist left bureaucracy from France who left them isolated and forced them to do a deal with Sarkozy. In Madagascar the workers and poor farmers sacked the police station and won the ranks of the army to their side forcing the President to resign. However lacking a revolutionary leadership they succumbed to a new deal between a populist leader and the Military Officers. What we see then is that when the workers break through the old bureaucratic barriers they face new left bureaucratic barriers. When they break through those they are faced with an open class (i.e. civil) war and the necessity of armed insurrection and for this there must be a proletarian revolutionary leadership.

If, in the next period, against the treacherous leaderships, the tendency of masses uprisings is generalized and a real masses counteroffensive takes place, the current impasse will shift in favor of the proletariat taking it to a revolutionary mobilization like that of 1968-74. If on the contrary, in spite of its intentions, the proletariat, tied down by its leaderships, can't advance to a counteroffensive position, the reactionary elements in this transitional situation will become decisive. As Trotsky said, 'History' will punish the proletariat for not having taken power, throwing the world economy into even worse depressions, crises, and the generalized destruction of all values with the result of massive unemployment, destruction of the productive forces, colonial wars, Bonapartism and fascism.

As the FLT said in the Editorial of OOI 12 part I, in April, 2008 we proposed the 23 Points program as 'acid tests' to separate the reformists from the revolutionaries in the actual struggles that are emerging in all the 'hot spots' of the world. These are the 'acid tests' that can be used to urgently regroup the healthy currents of principled Trotskyists and other revolutionary workers' organisations to help build a new international leadership that the workers urgently demand and deserve. To these points, we add now the new revolutionary lessons - "the practical lessons taken from the revolutionary conditions", as Trotsky said - from the new counterrevolutionary attacks and the reaction - as in Palestine, Afghanistan, Cuba, the reactionary strikes of the English Trade Unions, etc - and the new revolutionary uprisings of the exploited masses as in Guadeloupe, Madagascar, Greece, France, etc.

The FLT is a small revolutionary international tendency in the world proletariat vanguard. We cannot lead the masses and their revolutionary struggles to the victorious socialist revolution yet. But meanwhile as the heat of the objective situation creates the conditions for the revival

of Bolshevism, we devote all our forces to the two principal tasks in the struggle to recreate the historical leadership that the world proletariat -that is a world party of the socialist revolution based on the legacy and program of the Fourth International and its founding congress of 1938.

These two principal tasks are first of all, putting all our forces at the service of the workers who are entering pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations - as in Guadeloupe, Madagascar, Greece and France, etc.- to help build, generalize and centralizing their democratic assemblies and congresses and the armed workers and poor farmers defence organs in these countries. By

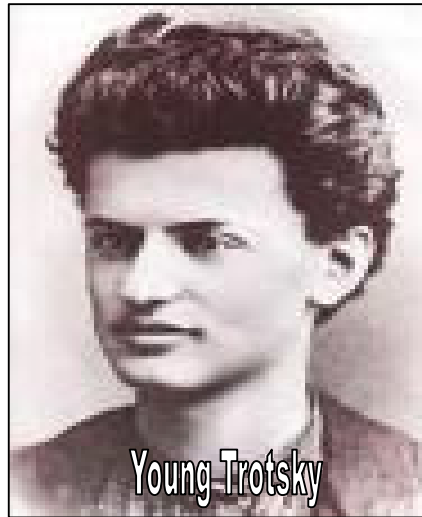
mobilizing their power in their armed independent organisations workers can rapidly remove the treacherous leaders, unite the vanguard and win over the masses looking for the road to revolution. But this will be only possible through a determined struggle against all the treacherous leaders, especially the fake Trotskyists who are the most deceptive, by proving in each fight who are the friends and enemies of the masses.

The second task, inseparable and linked to the first one, is to put 100 % of our forces into the fight to defeat any attempt to set up new centrist parties like the "Two and a half" International of the 1920s that acts to

confuse and divert the vanguard into new deals with the imperialists, weakening and disarming the proletariat before the fascist reactions. We reject all unprincipled regrouping of revolutionaries without proper balance sheets of their betrayals and around diplomatic points of agreement like the Unification Congress of 1963. We are for the building of a genuine international in the first instance by rallying all principled Trotskyists and revolutionary fighters in a 'new Zimmerwald and Kienthal' of the 21st Century to solve the crisis of revolutionary leadership and thus solve the historical crisis of humanity. This 21st century Zimmerwald and Kienthal is necessary to arm the international proletariat to fight and win the class war now opened by the imperialists.

To this end the FLT has recently entered into Joint Committee to form International Leninist Trotskyist Fraction with the South African revolutionaries of the Workers International Vanguard League -WIVL- and the FLT. It is a small step but a big sign that we have entered one of those "exceptional periods in history" as Trotsky said, where the revolutionaries are able to break out of their the isolation and merge with the international proletarian vanguard, which leaves the reformists thrashing about like fish out of water. It is a small but significant advance that marks the start of the offensive of the internationalist Trotskyists. We will commit ourselves without reservation to taking up this challenge to fight for the new international leadership as long as we hold true to our program and strategy.

[Discussion document translated from Spanish, and based on an edited summary of a Draft Statement of the Secretariat of the Leninist Trotskyist Fraction]



What We Fight For

Overthrow Capitalism

Historically, capitalism expanded world-wide to free much of humanity from the bonds of feudal or tribal society, and developed the economy, society and culture to a new higher level. But it could only do this by exploiting the labor of the productive classes to make its profits. To survive, capitalism became increasingly destructive of "nature" and humanity. In the early 20th century it entered the epoch of imperialism in which successive crises unleashed wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. Today we fight to end capitalism's wars, famine, oppression and injustice, by mobilising workers to overthrow their own ruling classes and bring to an end the rotten, exploitative and oppressive society that has exceeded its use-by date.

Fight for Socialism

By the 20th century, capitalism had created the pre-conditions for socialism -a world-wide working class and modern industry capable of meeting all our basic needs. The potential to eliminate poverty, starvation, disease and war has long existed. The October Revolution proved this to be true, bringing peace, bread and land to millions. But it became the victim of the combined assault of imperialism and Stalinism. After 1924 the USSR, along with its deformed offspring in Europe, degenerated back towards capitalism. In the absence of a workers political revolution, capitalism was restored between 1990 and 1992. Vietnam and China then followed. In the 21st century only Cuba and North Korea survive as degenerate workers states. We unconditionally defend these states against capitalism and fight for political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy as part of world socialism.

Defend Marxism

While the economic conditions for socialism exist today, standing between the working class and socialism are political, social and cultural barriers. They are the capitalist state and bourgeois ideology and its agents. These agents claim that Marxism is dead and capitalism need not be exploitative. We say that Marxism is a living science that explains both capitalism's continued exploitation and its attempts to hide class exploitation behind the appearance of individual "freedom" and "equality". It reveals how and why the reformist, Stalinist and centrist misleaders of the working class tie workers to bourgeois ideas of nationalism, racism, sexism and equality. Such false beliefs will be exploded when the struggle against the inequality, injustice, anarchy and barbarism of capitalism in crisis, led by a revolutionary Marxist party, produces a revolutionary class-consciousness.

For a Revolutionary Party

The bourgeois and its agents condemn the Marxist party as totalitarian. We say that without a democratic and a centrally organised party there can be no revolution. We base our beliefs on the revolutionary tradition of Bolshevism and Trotskyism. Such a party, armed with a transitional program, forms a bridge that joins the daily fight to defend all the past and present gains won from capitalism, to the victorious socialist revolution. Defensive struggles for bourgeois rights and freedoms, for decent wages and conditions, will link up the struggles of workers of all nationalities, genders, ethnicities and sexual orientations, bringing about movements for workers control, political strikes and the arming of the working class, as necessary steps to workers' power and the smashing of the bourgeois state. Along the way, workers will learn that each new step is one of many in a long march to revolutionise every barrier put in the path to the victorious revolution.

Fight for Communism

Communism stands for the creation of a classless, stateless society beyond socialism that is capable of meeting all human needs. Against the ruling class lies that capitalism can be made "fair" for all; that nature can be "conserved"; that socialism and communism are "dead"; we raise the red flag of communism to keep alive the revolutionary tradition of the Communist Manifesto of 1848, the Bolshevik-led October Revolution; the Third Communist International until 1924, the revolutionary Fourth International up to 1940 before its collapse into centrism. We fight to build a new, Fifth, Communist International, as a world party of socialism capable of leading workers to a victorious struggle for socialism.

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Other member are: International Workers League (LOI-CI) Argentina, International Workers Party (POI) Chile, Revolutionary Trotskyist League (RTL) Peru, Red October International (ORI) Bolivia, and the Trotskyist Fraction (FT) Brazil.

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